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THE CHURCH AND THE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT
IN THE UNITED STATES

BY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. EARLY U.S. LAND POLICIES.....	7
III. THE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT IS BORN	25
IV. THE CURRENT SCENE IN CONSERVATION	41
V. THE CHURCH AND CONSERVATION I....	65
VI. THE CHURCH AND CONSERVATION II....	110
VII. THE CHURCH AND CONSERVATION PHILOSOPHY.....	118
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	134

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As with so many other aspects of our revolutionary age, we appear to be approaching a crisis in America in the conservation of our natural resources. The conservation movement, as an organized force, has been in existence in this country for about 100 years. During that time it has grown from a few isolated prophetic voices to a great national effort, both government and private. Much progress has been made in establishing wise use of our natural wealth and in combating the destruction that rapid industrial and urban development has left on our land.

But even that progress is today threatened with obliteration. The swelling tide of urbanization, rapid population increase, and the impact of a technological civilization in the nuclear age, have brought great danger to the American natural environment. At the same time, it is clear that conservation as a way of life has not captured the American imagination, has failed to become part of our consciousness. As a people, we have been, and are, careless with our land.

Today, conservation is much more than the provision of good fishing and hunting opportunities; much more than good forestry or game management. The very survival of man in

his environment, the earth, is now a conservation question. Air and water pollution, radioactive contamination, failing water supplies, the loss of identity of urban dwellers, all are symptoms of a vast imbalance between man and nature. Conservationists, if they are to meet these and other huge problems, must have all the encouragement, ingenuity, and assistance, that can be found.

It has long been my belief that Christianity has resources and insights into good conservation which it has seldom offered for use. Similarly, it has been apparent to me that the deep conviction and learning of the great American conservationists have never been properly understood by the Church, and little attempt has been made to deal with these insights as part of the truth about the world in which we move and live. The American land has made a deep impress on the national consciousness. The traditions of forests and prairie, deserts and mountains, and of the men who settled them, are part of the great national legend. In the entire history of the world, there has been nothing to equal the settlement of America by a proud people. By and large, the Church has not yet assimilated this heritage.

To gather background and reference material for this paper, many books, articles, periodicals, and other sources

in the conservation field were studied. There is a wealth of excellent material on the subject, only a small part of which appears in this bibliography. In addition, letters requesting information were sent to approximately fifteen persons who are professional conservationists: foresters, wildlife managers, teachers, resource development specialists, etc. From them came many valuable suggestions and references.

The entire paper was written with the basic conviction that the Church in America and the conservation movement should be much more closely related than at present. Chapters II and III deal with the historic way in which the American land has been treated since the coming of the white man, and how the idea of conservation was born in this country. Chapter IV discusses the contemporary scene, a time which is referred to as one of "quiet crisis". Chapters V and VI review the Church's response, first in three ethical areas which have a basic bearing on conservation in this country, then to man as urban dweller. Finally, Chapter VII contains some conclusions and recommendations for both the Church and conservationists.

Some definition of terms may be helpful. "Conservation"¹ here throughout refers to wise use, not just preservation of any given resource. Preservation may be the wisest use of a

resource at a given time, or it may not, depending on the circumstances. Thus, it is proposed that a portion of the Indiana Dunes, on Lake Michigan, be set aside as a National Seashore. This would be good conservation in that these dune areas are unique and are rapidly disappearing under industrial expansion in the area. Preservation here is the wisest use. On the other hand, recent government directives increasing the annual allowable harvest of timber on certain National Forests in the Northeast is also good conservation. So is the current effort by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to encourage the harvest of the largely untapped shrimp resource in the Gulf of Maine. In both these latter cases, wise use of a resource means using fully the potential that is present; preservation here is not, as yet, a factor in the use of these renewable resources.

"Ecology" is another term which might require some definition. Basically, it is the science of the relationship of living forms to their environment. As used by the conservationist however, the term is broadened to include the relationship of all the things of the earth. The use of the description "ecological dominant" to describe man's role on earth should be self-explanatory, though it must be remembered that man's increasing mastery of the earth is a relatively new phenomenon in history. One of the

basic problems to emerge in this study is that man has not yet learned that he is in ecological relationship with the rest of creation, and that his ignorance of this fact has caused great harm to nature and to himself.

We know painfully little about ecology. It is scarcely a hundred years since Thomas Henry Huxley wrote his essay on "Man's Place in Nature". One century ago, the Darwinian theory introduced to the intellectual world the idea that man had a natural heritage. The implication that man might not have been put into the world with a special proprietary relation to nature has been slow to dawn on intellectuals and it has not yet dawned on most of humanity. (Humanity has acted) as the ultimate parasite.²

These words, by the Dean of a School of Science of Columbia University, may sound harsh to a man who has been told by his Christian faith that he is "a little lower than the angels" or "created in the image of God". But the indictment is perhaps needed to shock men into their responsibility for the proper care of the earth. Certainly Christianity does offer to man a higher goal than merely to become the "ultimate parasite" in a hostile and vicious world. Yet, in the attainment of this higher goal, the Christian way is one of responsibility and duty. This paper hopes to show how this way might be directed to a more loving and careful relationship to the earth which bears us all.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 1

¹The first use of the word "conservation" to describe careful stewardship of the earth, has been attributed to Gifford Pinchot and Overton Price, both early officials of the U.S. Forest Service. Price had noted that government forests in India were called "conservancies". See Udall, Stewart, The Quiet Crisis, Avon Books, New York, 1963, p.118.

²Dunning, J., Massachusetts Audubon Magazine, No.49, Summer, 1965.

CHAPTER II

EARLY U. S. LAND POLICIES

Mr. Stewart Udall, the present U. S. Secretary of the Interior, has ably sketched the history of American natural resource policy in his recent best-selling popular book on conservation entitled The Quiet Crisis¹. He has divided U. S. land and resource policy into roughly three periods: those of extraction and exploitation; preservation and calls for reform; and the present call for a new land ethic and the answering "New Conservation". The next two chapters of this paper will examine the first two of these historic periods in their relationship to the churches of America. An exhaustive review of these periods in our history will not be attempted here for there is extensive coverage of this in American historical literature; what will be treated will be some of the spiritual implications of these periods, following the chronology set forth in the Quiet Crisis.

In the first chapter of his book, Mr. Udall has a powerfully descriptive passage on the three advantages which the first English settlers brought with them and which would eventually guarantee the complete supremacy of the white man in the New World:

...the colonists brought with them three things which would assure their predominance and ultimately would change the face of the continent. First, they brought a new technology.

One evening the sun going down over the Appalachians set on an age of polished stone; the next morning it rose on an age of iron. From the moment that the settlers won a foothold and set up their first forge, the sweep of American history was certain: the Indians would be subjugated; so, too, would be the land. When the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock they did not even have a saw, but they brought to the American continent Iron Age skills that spelled doom for the Indian way of life. Once the blacksmiths and gunsmiths set up shop, once the horses and oxen arrived, the ax and gun and wheel would assert their supremacy.

Second, the colonists brought with them a cast of mind that made them want to remake the New World. The Indians could only plan from moon to moon, from season to season, and accepted the world the way they found it, but the newcomers believed they held their destiny in their hands and they planned accordingly. The Pilgrims were men of the Renaissance. Their forebears had developed trial-and-error experimenting into primitive science, and had nurtured the inventor's gift.

And, finally, these Europeans brought with them a concept of land ownership wholly different from the Indian's: fences and formal papers with wax seals attached were its emblems, and it involved exclusive possession of parcels of land. The European with a title to land owned it whole, no matter whose sweat went into farming it, owned it even if he were a hundred or a thousand miles away. It was his to use or misuse as he saw fit; and he wanted to get and hold as much of it as the law-or the King-would allow.²

One can stand today on a high bluff in the Towns of Wellfleet or Truro, Massachusetts (thanks to the establishment of the Cape Cod National Seashore) and watch the setting sun over Cape Cod Bay. That same sun that Mr. Udall mentions as going down on an age of polished stone also on that early winter evening

in 1620 sank beyond the Pilgrim's gaze into a continent of almost indescribable richness. If, like Abraham, these simple English colonists were conscious of having followed God's command to go out into a strange land, they still could have no idea of the vast incredible bounty of natural wealth which lay beyond the Plymouth hills across the Bay. For beyond those low glacial ridges, for distances they could not conceive, lay the store of wealth that would make the United States: items whose mere identification would in some cases have to wait years for the botanist, the geologist, the naturalist.

Weymouth pine, yellow pine, red oak, white oak, pecan hickory, ashes, walnuts, elms, spruces, firs, hemlocks, Douglas fir, redwood, and the giant sequoias. Striped bass, clams, quahogs, oysters, brook trout, rainbows, walleyes, pickerel, muskellunge, pike, bass, catfish, whitefish, steelhead, and Pacific salmon. Whitetail deer, moose, raccoon, otter, beaver, muskrat, fisher, marten, antelope, bear, wolves, buffalo (estimates have ranged from ten to one hundred million)³ and elk. Quail, turkeys, ducks, geese, swans, pelicans, passenger pigeons (an estimated five billion!)⁴, grouse, and myriads of shorebirds. Coal, oil, gas, iron, silver, gold, lead, and uranium. Billions upon billions of gallons of clear

water; billions upon billions of cubic feet of the richest topsoil ever found by man. If, as Udall suggests, the conquest by the white man of this vast store was inevitable, still no conquerors in history knew less about the extent of their spoils than did the vanguard of that army of white men on the sand hills of Cape Cod in November of 1620.⁵

As settlement proceeded, the new inhabitants began to use the resources at faster and faster rates. Save for the obstacles of Indians and distance, they were there for the taking. Attempts at regulation from England failed increasingly as the Revolutionary spirit grew; probably more of the King's Arrow white pines fell to illegal colonist axes as they did to agents of His Majesty's Navy. Nothing could stop the natural desires of men who had emigrated from Europe with its strict land and resource policies from helping themselves to this treasure store of this great Utopia. This was something unique in human history, a migration into a brand-new, rich, land by men eager and capable of exploiting it.

It is this unique character of American settlement which at least partially explains the Church's attitude toward the use of these resources in the early days of this country. The American land early put its stamp on the churches here, as well as on all

the other organizations which the colonists had brought with them, and gave them a character as much or more than they ever brought to bear upon the land. This factor of the land's impress upon the churches is extremely important, and goes far toward explaining the relationship in this country of the church to the environment.⁶

Several of these characteristics early imposed themselves on the churches in America, and some of these remain to this day. One of these was denominationalism and sectarianism. Whereas most European countries following the Reformation and wars of religion in the 16th Century ended with one, or at the most two or three, churches within their borders, this country, especially by its "No Establishment" clause of the Constitution, soon harbored representative bodies of most of the major world religions and almost all of the Christian denominations. As a result, much energy was spent in denominational rivalry rather than looking outward to helping form national land and resource policies.

Another factor which caused the churches to look toward their own housekeeping matters, especially in later years, was the swelling tide of immigration. This was especially true of the Lutheran and Roman Catholic Churches, of whom the latter especially had the monumental task of ministering to the hundreds

of thousands of its faithful during the great immigrations from Europe in the 19th Century. The chance for the Roman Catholic Church to play a really large role in land policy early in the nation's history was lost as a result of three major events: the defeat of the French in Canada, the Louisiana Purchase in 1802, and Spanish California's submission to the United States in 1848. Thus, it was the English Protestant ethos which became characteristic of most of the frontier.

Deism too, which had spread from England in the 17th Century, early influenced American religious life. Deism "stood for greater distrust of the supernatural in religion, greater faith in the sufficiency of man's reason, and greater trust in man's moral ability to lead the good life."⁷ It is easy to see how men, influenced by the boundless wealth that the new land offered for only the work involved in taking it, could be attracted by such a man-centered, optimistic, religious outlook.

Finally, much of American religious life in the first two centuries of the nation was intensely personalistic and moralistic and influenced by the simple faith of Pietism which "stood for mystical experience, practical and intense preaching, the priesthood of all believers, and piety and moderation in conduct."⁸ Great distances and a lack of elaborate institutional structures,

among other factors, caused a waxing and waning of religious fervor, sparked by the two great periods of revivalism, the "Great Awakenings" of 1730-1760, and 1790-1840.

In such a personalistic religious atmosphere social issues such as conservation were not pressing; and the great debate over slavery had not yet developed. Individual moral questions such as temperance and conversion commanded the attention. The Indian problem, which might be called our first real social issue as far as the churches were concerned, again was seen as a problem of conversion; the idea being, as put in the preface to a Presbyterian report of the Sioux missions; "(As they) become good Christians, they are bound to become good citizens".⁹ It undoubtedly occurred to many churchmen that the basic Indian problem was the uprooting of an indigenous people from their land, but, in the rush of growth of this country, the best that the churchmen could probably do was to follow after and try to minister to a displaced people. Some realization did exist that the Indian question was at heart an ecological one, as seen from this Methodist mission report of 1820:

The Indians imagine that they have sufficient reason for disliking the white people, particularly the Americans; for say they, they have taken away our land; enclosed our hunting places for the use of their cattle, done infinite mischief

to us, especially by the introduction of whiskey among us, and probably intend in time to seize upon all our country, and to destroy our nation.¹⁰

"To seize upon all our country. " These words from an imaginary but highly perceptive literary Indian in the 1820's perhaps sum up one of the most vital of the forces which acted upon our country's use of its land and resources almost from the beginning. The churches, as well as nearly everyone else in America, were early possessed by the idea that God had placed the white man in the New World to be his Chosen People. That Americans would "seize upon" all this country, eventually forcing out French, Spanish, and Indian, was a foregone conclusion; and that was only the beginning. For, as Stewart Udall notes, this concept of "Manifest Destiny" was in operation long before it was coined as a formal phrase.¹¹ Nor, was Manifest Destiny, in its widest sense, confined to westward land expansion, though at the period of which we are speaking it was its primary manifestation. Overall it stands for the indominatable sense of the American spirit; that it is a Chosen People in a Chosen Land, a feeling that would later have the widest consequences on the people's feeling toward regulation of resource use.

Only a country of huge natural wealth in resources plus the freedom of her people to help themselves to this wealth, could have given birth to such a concept. When reasons for the unique American character are searched out, surely one must give large place to the free timber and soil and water; fish and game; even the free view of the pioneer as he looked "over the ridge" to lands rolling for miles away beneath his feet. All were his for the taking.

Such a spirit, with the fires of Manifest Destiny burning brightly within it, was above all things, free. Its sense of freedom came from an almost complete lack of restraint; it wanted no restrictive European land laws, no agents, no bishops, no king. There were to be no restraints for men were building an empire on their own, and though the builder might be the most vociferous of frontier non-believers, deep inside himself he believed that he had divine sanction to use the goods of this new land. This sense of freedom to use, and answer to no man, led to the formation of a character that tugged its forelock to no one. The immortal Jigger Johnson, who, in a long life in the woods of northern New England, came to be one of the most famous logging camp bosses in history, used to greet new workers thus: "I can run faster, jump higher, squat lower, move sideways quicker, and

spit further, than any son of a bitch in camp. "12

It was crude, it was rough, it might be inelegant, but it was the manifesto of a free man in a free country whose destiny lay in supervising the cutting of hundreds of millions of dollars worth of spruce and white pine which nature had been growing for centuries and which now belonged to Jigger and the Connecticut Valley Lumber Company.

Nor did this spirit escape the churches. They too, after becoming established on these shores, saw themselves as part of a great movement to build the greatest nation the world had ever seen. The seldom questioned the plundering of the national wealth. partly because they had no precedent to do so, coming as they did from the European tradition, with its long-established land policies; but also partly because even if such precedent existed, the majority of Americans probably would have ignored it. They had come to see their task as one of a rapid and complete conquering of the land, not of wise husbanding of what they had found.

By and large, with a few notable exceptions such as the Mormons and the Amish, the churches acquiesced in this period of exploitation and rapid settlement, and made little mention of the increasing waste that accompanied it. And, to be fair, in the

early days, from 1620 to 1850 there were only the bare rudiments of knowledge of the effects that men were having upon the land.

The science of ecology was barely being born. In those pre-Darwinian days man was seen as standing supreme. He had been given a free hand over nature and could do with her as he pleased.

But, after all, the effects were beginning to show. If dedicated Christians could not yet see the evidence of waste and haste on the land, they were beginning to see it in men. For though greed and plunder had not reached its height by any means in the early 19th Century, and would go on for at least another 80 years, their effects were beginning to show on the empire builders. In 1836 Dr. Lyman Beecher, Presbyterian president of Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio, made a lecture tour on the East Coast, giving his famous "Plea for the West" address; which was a stirring call for aid to theological education on the frontier.

A review of a printed copy of that address in the Christian Review, a Baptist publication, contains vivid illustrations of these two factors mentioned above; the concept of Manifest Destiny, and the effects that wholesale exploitation were beginning to have on the American character:

At first sight, the Plea (for the West) seems to be urged on the ground that this nation is, in the providence of God, destined to lead the way in the moral and political emancipation of the world: or, that Millenium is to commence in America. The argument, were it thrown into the form of a proposition, would stand thus: Our country is to convert the world, and the West is our country.

(But as to this) we confess that we have but little confidence (for) we are avaricious, to a reproach. A thirst for gain is seen all over the land. It is a national peculiarity. And though it is often commended, as distinguishing us from those whose minds are stupid, and whose habits are stereotyped, still, when it comes to engross the public mind, and to seize the people with a mania, and everybody makes hast to be rich, the cause of Him who had not where to lay his head cannot be expected rapidly to advance.¹³

It is possible to detect in this a note of wistful query.

Why were men becoming avaricious and greedy when they had been given so much in this land? Perhaps this question as well as any illustrates a fundamental dichotomy in American religious thought on nature which began to emerge in the 1830's and 40's. This tension has been studied by the late Dr. Perry Miller of the Harvard Divinity School.¹⁴

Dr. Miller's thesis is that during the mid 19th Century Americans entered their first real period of self-analysis and expression. Naturally, in a time of great expansion much of this reflection centered around the American attitude toward nature. The misgivings which had been slowly emerging over the utilitarian

treatment which Americans had been giving their resources found an expression in the Romantic movement.¹⁵ Nature as portrayed by Cooper, Bierstadt, William Cullen Bryant, and Hudson River School of artists, summarized for people the glories of an idealistic world of unspoiled nature.

They could view the paintings and read the poetry and literature, then see in a new light what was happening to the real world outside their doors. The first shock of guilt and revulsion over what they had been doing to their land came. But, pulling in the opposite direction, was the frontier spirit: conquer and civilize! Which was it to be, nature or civilization? The battle was fought in the souls of more sensitive and perceptive citizens. The answer, of course, was never in doubt. From the time of the Jacksonian Democrats' victory over the Jeffersonians the conquest of the entire land was inevitable. Still, the more rapid and wasteful the settlement became, the more materialistic the spirit grew, the more the American conscience needed salving. It found it in a romanticized, idealistic, love of nature.

Nature came to be revered. It even became a substitute for the divine revelation which was the basis of the historic Christian faith. Wordsworth said it:¹⁶

One impulse from a vernal wood
 May teach you more of man
 Of mortal evil and of good
 Than all the sages can

Though the Romantic movement had come to America from Europe, the use made of it on the two continents was quite different: "In America it served not so much for artistic salvation as for an assuaging of national anxiety,"¹⁷ Miller states. More often than not the nature which was portrayed was less than accurate: saccharine, over-drawn, sometimes merely foolish. The sight of Niagara Falls elicited the following from a young lady in 1858:

Oh, Aunt! what can I say that shall give you the least inkling of that wonderful sight! We were silenced, awed by the scene. Alfred, poor fellow, squeezed my hand... I returned the pressure; such scenes are so overpowering... As for Alfred's friend Plenderleath, he would do nothing but suck the end of his cane, and ejaculate "By Gad!" at intervals.¹⁸

But, foolish as some of it might have been, this was the ideal of nature which was impressed on the American consciousness and which survives there, in large measure, to this day. Millions know "Hiawatha"; far fewer are familiar with the sordid history of our Indian policy. Thousands pore over Walden in the comfort of their studies, dreaming of a similar life, far fewer have actually braved the woods for any length of time to swat black flies, live

on skimpy food, and go for days soaking wet without a change of clothes. The contempt of the Western settler for those who would sing the beauties of nature from the drawing room in Boston and New York while he was clearing land, putting up sod houses, clubbing rattlesnakes, and fighting off savage Indians, is at least partially understandable.

Being idealistic, the Romantic movement accomplished little in practical matters of conservation. The business of the nation was still exploitation and rapid settlement, no matter what its rationalizations might be about it. But if its accomplishments on the land were few it did have far-reaching spiritual implications for the American. A truce was reached in men's minds and souls, the reckless exploitation of the land would go on while an ideal nature would forever be enshrined in the men's hearts. Men would strongly continue to profess belief in the Bible and Manifest Destiny, but they would draw strength of spirit from the lakes and forests and mountains "far away in the Golden West". Miller notes, that "superficial appearances to the contrary, America is not crass, materialistic: it is Nature's nation, possessing a heart that watches and receives."¹⁹

A few rejected the truce and called it hypocrisy to destroy nature while enshrining it in the mind. The most famous of the rebels, Whitman, Melville, and Henry Thoreau, renounced a Christianity that was failing to reconcile wilderness and civilization.²⁰ But for most, the arrangement was adequate. The plundering would need a far stronger challenge to its supposed mandate of "conquer and civilize."

That challenge was being born in the 1860's during the time that the Romantic period was at its height. It was arising from a new understanding of the relation of man to the earth and would emerge among some of those who had been drawn to nature through romanticism. Though the Conservation Movement would operate on different premises than romanticism, it would always seek its support from the people on the reverence for nature which had come from the romantic period, which Stewart Udall would later call the time of the first stirring of the American conscience toward her treatment of nature.²¹

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II

¹ Udall, op. cit.,

² Ibid., pp. 26-27.

³ Ibid., p. 76.

⁴ Ibid., p. 75.

⁵ Actually, it would be many years before the full extent of the American continent was known. The amazing legends and half-truths which grew up around the mystery-shrouded land have been described in Bernard de Voto's Course of Empire, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1952, 647pp.

⁶ The late Professor Raymond W. Albright of the Episcopal Theological School, always stressed to his students in American Church History the neglected field of study of the character which the American landscape pressed upon the churches here.

⁷ Olmstead, Clifton, E., Religion in America Past and Present, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs New Jersey, 1961, p. 48.

⁸ Ibid. p37.

⁹ Gilman, S. C., The Conquest of the Sioux, The Hollenbeck Press Indianapolis, 1900, p. II.

¹⁰ "Armenius, Theophilus", "Report on Missions", The Methodist Magazine, 3:276, July, 1820

¹¹ Udall, op. cit., p. 36.

¹² Holbrook, Stewart, L., Yankee Loggers, Published privately by the International Paper Company, New York, 1961, p54.

¹³ "A Reply to the Plea for the West", editorial, The Christian Review, 1:248, December, 1836.

¹⁴ Miller, Perry, :The Romantic Dilemma in American Nationalism and the Concept of Nature, Harvard Theological Review, 48:247 October, 1955.

¹⁵ Miller, op. cit., p243.

¹⁶ Ibid., p244.

¹⁷ Ibid. p247.

¹⁸ Harper's Weekly, October 2, 1858, quoted in the American Heritage Book of Natural Wonders, American Heritage Publishing Company, 1963, p121.

¹⁹ Miller, op cit., p244.

²⁰ Ibid p252.

²¹ Udall, op. cit. , pp51-65.

CHAPTER III

THE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT IS BORN

The period from the end of the Civil War to World War 2 saw the birth and growth of effort to stem the tide of natural resource waste which was growing at an increasing rate. The names connected with the movement are well known in American history: George Perkins Marsh, John Muir, Senator Carl Schurz, Gifford Pinchot, Theodore Roosevelt, Sen. George Norris, Henry Wallace, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The lives of these men from Muir to F.D.R. spanned a period that saw resources drained by two world wars and a major depression. It was a time of using new concepts of land use to fight against long entrenched habits of waste and destruction. It brought extensive social legislation and national planning, the very ideas of which were practically unknown when men such as Pinchot and Muir were born. Above all, in the resource field, it was to be a time of strife and conflict.

The adversaries were more formidable than any that Thoreau could have dreamed of when he railed against the Concord farmers as money grubbers or the diminutive Concord and Fitchburg Railroad as an alien invader of the old Indian haunts. An era of rampant individualism and laissez faire economic policies encouraged exploiters of the land to an even more callous disregard

for the future. "The Public be Damned" was indeed an apt slogan for the time. Industrial inventions such as the steel plow, the McCormick Reaper, and the internal combustion engine enabled the conquest of the land to proceed at a much faster rate. Settlement and exploitation were now organized and mechanized, and the older frontier barriers of time and vast distance were beginning to fall. Corporate profit, rather than individual homesteading, was the major incentive for settlement now, as the post-Civil War nation passed from an agrarian to a manufacturing country.¹

The first warnings came as the virgin lands were used up. The idea of limitless abundance had always been based on free land to the west, once there was no more of that the premise of "abundance forever" had to be faced anew. Interestingly enough, the first warnings of depletion were born not from enlightened and far-thinking citizens of the eastern cities, but came from those who lived with nature and made their living from her. Early foresters, some of the first in the United States, witnessed the ravaging of the Great Lakes pineries in the 80's. Geologists began to look seriously at the limits of the great copper and iron belts. Naturalists, following a growing trend to get out of the laboratory and into the field, began to report on what was actually happening to buffalo, passenger pigeon, and waterfowl populations.²

The warnings that came back from the woods and prairies were the same. We were going to run out. We were using up timber and soil and minerals too fast, with no thought to the future. We had to stop, change our thinking. Initially, these calls concerned the public land. At mid-19th Century, the greater part of the United States was public domain; all save the thirteen original states, plus Texas. From that time until the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, federal land policy was concerned with giving title of much of this land away to encourage settlement and development. The Pre-emption Act of 1841 provided not more than 160 acres of non-mineral land for any settler who would live on it and pay \$1.50 per acre for the title. President Lincoln signed the famous Homestead Act in 1862 which modified the Pre-emption Act in that 160 acres was now granted to anyone who would settle for five years, make specified improvements, and pay a modest fee, usually less than \$20.00.

The Mineral Act of 1886, the Desert Land Act of 1877, and the Timber and Stone Act of 1878, all provided entry into federal land for settlement and exploitation. The growing huge railroad corporations too, had their share. They were given more land than all the homesteaders combined, 150 million acres in all, to encourage rapid expansion. The familiar western land pattern of alternate

square mile sections of "railroad land" began to be laid down across the prairies.³ It began to look as though the whole of the public domain was to be given away for private speculation.⁴ What had started as an encouragement to homesteading and settlement had become a huge land-grab, often riddled with corrupt, dishonest, and illegal practices.

Doing a "land office business" became a familiar term in the American language. The Homestead Act required the erection of a dwelling--so a house 14 x 16 inches, not feet would be built. The Timber Culture Act gave 160 acres to those who would cultivate trees on forty acres, so settlers took the 160, cut 120, and filed the remaining forty as their "culture area". The Swamp and Overflow Act gave flowed lands to the states, men swore they traversed coveted acres by boat thus confirming their "flowed" status, but they neglected to mention that the boat was on wheels, pulled by a horse. School teachers accepted free excursion trips to California paid for by timber companies, all they had to do was "buy" a government section, swear it was for their own use, and deed it to the timber company before the train left for home.

Much of the early conservation effort went into attempts to curb the most flagrant malpractices and to withdraw some of the public lands to protect them from immediate abuse. The idea was

to preserve them for the future. When in 1872 the Congress approved the setting aside of over 2,000,000 acres in the Yellowstone country as the first National Park, there was much misunderstanding, many seeing the move as totally unnecessary. Much of the favorable support for withdrawal came from purely economic argument: save an area now from exploitation so that it will be available later. It was merely piecing out the nation's assets over a longer period of time.

But a more fundamental land philosophy was developing behind the early conservation movement, one which would have profound theological implications. The place of man in relation to nature was being looked at in a new light, especially as a result of the revolutionary work of Charles Darwin. Darwin (who had studied theology before undertaking his biological research) had challenged the concept of man as distinct from nature and saw him rather as a part of it. Though his ideas of evolution would become modified and much more highly sophisticated with the passage of time, they would become the basis for the science of ecology, the study of the relationships between living things and their surroundings.

One of the most influential of the immediate post-Darwinian studies of nature was George Perkins Marsh's Man and Nature, first published in 1864.⁵ This remarkable Vermonter was United States Minister to Italy from 1861 until his death in 1882. A true "scholarly humanist"⁶, learned in many fields such as philology, education, and geography, he helped to bridge the gap between Transcendentalism and practical conservation in the post-Civil War period.

Man and Nature, his monumental ecological study of man's habitat, used Marsh's extensive world knowledge of the evil effects of forest and grassland destruction. Marsh harbored no hatred of man and his works. Indeed, his biographer, David Lowenthal, saw in him "a combination of Calvinism and romanticism" which "predisposed him to exalt the role of man in nature".⁷ But his high view of man did not prevent Marsh from showing that man was inextricably bound to the earth, and that every human action left its mark on the natural world:

Not a sod has been turned, not a mattock struck into the ground, without leaving its enduring record of the human toils and aspirations that accompanied that act. . . . Every turf is the monument of a hundred lives, and to our eye. . . the very earth of Europe seems decrepit and hory.⁸

John Muir, the poet of the Sierras, would say it this way: "Every time man tries to pick up something by itself he finds it hitched to the rest of the universe." The ideas were fundamentally the same, that man's treatment of the earth is not a disconnected, piece by piece, series of events, but an interconnected whole, and the manner in which man treats the earth will be reflected, sooner or later, in how the earth treats him. It was this growing philosophy which would provide an important spark for the conservation movement.

The beginning of conservation as an organized movement in the U.S. was in 1873, the year following the Yellowstone Bill, when the American Association for the Advancement of Science memorialized Congress on the matter of the nation's forest resources. Dr. Franklin B. Hough, who was later to be the first U.S. Forestry Commissioner, steeped himself in Marsh's Man and Nature before personally drafting the text of the memorial.⁹ But tangible progress was slow. Gifford Pinchot,¹⁰ the father of American forestry, recalls in his autobiography how in 1876 the American Forestry Council called a National Forestry Convention at Cape May, New Jersey and after hiring a special train, secured a total of three persons, one of whom was Dr. Hough.

Fifteen years later, when Pinchot arrived home after receiving a forestry education in Europe, little more had been accomplished. Some reserves had been withdrawn from immediate entry but the whole concept of conservation as a philosophy was still foreign to most Americans. There had been a lot of talking and debate, but very little tangible results.

Such were the facts when I came home. In spite of all the efforts of all the lovers of the forest-Webster, Emerson, Marsh, Warder, Hough, Schurz, Lundy, Rotrock, Fernow, and the rest-men and women who deserve far more credit than they ever got for their public-spirited effort to save a great natural resource; in spite of all the meetings and the writings and the attempted legislation, in the year 1891 there was not, I repeat, a single acre of forest under Forestry anywhere in the United States.¹¹

One trouble was that behind conservation was a philosophy which would-and still can- provoke bitter hostility. To assert that man might not, after all, be the supreme master of creation was bound to evoke adverse reaction. But more important for the immediate cause of conservation was the implicit demand in such a new philosophy that something more than profit and personal gain be involved in decisions regarding the land use of this country. It was perhaps amusing to debate in parlor society whether man was descended from the ape, but it was something else altogether when speculators were told that their treatment of the land would have irreversible consequences and that they thus

should be subject to some form of control and regulation. The whole idea of nature was wonderful so long as it did not interfere with free enterprise and the ability to make money. "Uncle Joe" Cannon, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, summed up the attitude in the early 1900's with his famous dictum "not one cent for scenery".

The scene was thus set for conflict, and the conservation movement was to be involved in battle for many years. It might be fairly said that it was Gifford Pinchot and Theodore Roosevelt, no strangers to conflict themselves, who actually brought conservation into practice in the U.S. On one famous occasion, they worked feverishly for ten days drawing up new timber reserves in six western states. They had to work fast, for that ten day period was the last that Roosevelt would have before he had to sign an Agricultural Appropriations Bill with an attached rider which stripped the President of power to create any new reserves in those same six states. Minutes before he finally signed the Appropriations Bill on the final day, Roosevelt, to the chagrin of western congressmen, formally proclaimed 16 million acres of new forest reserves.

Gradually, by sheer force of argument, the story that Pinchot and Roosevelt were telling began to be heard. A great turning point was the Governors Conference of 1908 where, in the East Room of the White House, Theodore Roosevelt spoke of the conservation idea that was so close to his heart. The audience was symbolically representative of both friends and former adversaries of conservation now tendering it support: William Jennings Bryan, Andrew Carnegie, James J. Hill, John Mitchell of the UMW, plus the governors of thirty-eight states and territories.

According to Harbaugh, his biographer, the President's address was "a testament of faith and a statement of hope". Conservation was "the chief material question that confronts us, second only-and second always- to the great fundamental question of morality". He went on:

In the past we have admitted the right of the individual to injure the future of the Republic for his own present profit. The time has come for a change. As a people we have the right and the duty, second to none other but the right and duty of obeying the moral law, of requiring and doing justice, to protect ourselves and our children against the wasteful development of our natural resources, whether that waste is caused by actual destruction of such resources or by making them impossible of development hereafter.¹²

From this time forward, as Secretary Udall has noted, conservation became a battle for what Theodore Roosevelt would call "real democracy."¹³ The conservation cause would be taken up by government, especially later during the years of Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal. It would widen to contain the "quiet revolt of the American middle class against the raiders".¹⁴ It would see the beginning of an era of social planning by government which had conservation as one of its basic goals.

During this period, from the time of Roosevelt until after World War II, the churches by and large gave tacit support to the conservation idea, mainly because the movement stood for a measure of social reform. Conservation, as seen by Theodore Roosevelt, meant a redistribution of the wealth that had been amassed by the few in the United States. The denominational weekly newspaper of the Disciples of Christ in 1910, in referring to the land scandals of the immediate past, warned against "land grant statesmen" and vowed that "public land and water power is not to be distributed to people through gifts to corporations but preserved for them (so that they will not be) capitalized into millions for the few".¹⁵

This feeling accompanied the growing efforts in some parts of the church to cope with the vast social problems resulting from the tremendous growth of the nation since the Civil War. Problems

of organized labor, working conditions, the pro and con over prohibition, World War I, the great slums of the cities into which millions of immigrants had crowded, all occupied the Church's attention. A few efforts were made to understand the problem of conservation from the standpoint of stewardship, a concept which was used by the conservationists themselves almost from the beginning. In 1922, the House of Deputies of the Protestant Episcopal Church, meeting in General Convention in Portland, Oregon adopted a resolution in which they expressed sorrow and concern for domestic animals. This was especially directed toward the great toll of animals during the Great War. But part of the resolution seemed to indicate an awareness of the moral consequences of man's past ill treatment of all of nature:

... We are also beginning to see that our treatment of the wild animals and birds of the air has been characterized not only by the greatest carelessness, but also to utter blindness to all that they are doing for us in an economic way and which we are coming to know through the teachings of a costly experience.

To be sure He (the Divine Lord) gave us dominion over (his creatures) but this dominion must always be exercised through the limits He laid down. . . .¹⁶

But the House of Bishops of that same convention passed up the chance to concur and issue a really strong statement on conservation, for in accepting the above resolution they mentioned only the domestic

animal situation and expressed concern for the "friendless dumb animals".

But the sense of corporate concern for nature, adumbrated in the Deputies' resolution was part of a slow tendency away from the extreme individualism of the frontier. The conservation movement itself was one of the major factors in this change. By the early 1930's the idea of national planning was becoming common, if still not widely accepted. The Federal Council of Churches, itself a product of increasing cooperative effort, in the early 30's took an official stand in favor of comprehensive economic planning.¹⁷

Later, in the 1950's, when the Eisenhower administration sought to return much of the federal conservation effort to the states, the proposed policy was opposed by several church spokesmen and periodicals. Speaking to the administration plan to gradually withdraw federal funds from soil conservation programs, the Executive Committee of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference stated:

(The federal government) cannot disclaim its duty in connection with an over-all program of soil and water conservation, erosion control, and fertility improvement. . . Individual and uncoordinated state conservation programs cannot cope with soil and water problems because watersheds, drainage areas, river systems, dust bowls, in short, water and wind erosion, do not respect state lines.¹⁸

In a series of articles and editorials during the 1950's, the liberal Protestant paper, Christian Century, also fought the Eisenhower conservation policy. Here, as in the past, most of the argument was based on the social effects of conservation and stressed the right of the American people to a share in the tangible assets which had accrued because of federal ownership and control of such resources as oil, timber and water power. It asserted that it would be a mistake to return control of these commodities to private interests, and to reverse policies of federal land which had been in existence since the time of Theodore Roosevelt.

Thus, a return to the older ways of laissez-faire resource policy was sharply challenged on many sides. It soon seemed improbable that the conservation victories that had been won up through the 1950's would be wiped out. But the battle was not over for conservationists, it was really only beginning. As the 1960's dawned, the threat to the country's resources assumed more formidable proportions than ever before. The impact of a technological age had caught up with the American out-of-doors with a bewildering rapidity. After 100 years, far from becoming part of the national consciousness, conservation found itself fighting for its very life.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

- ¹Ekirch, Arthur, A, Man and Nature in America, Columbia University Press, New York, 1963, pp35-46.
- ²Saur, Carl, O. , "The Agency of Man On Earth", in Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth, edited by William L. Thomas, University of Chicago Press, 1956, pp49-69.
- ³Pinchot, Gifford, Breaking New Ground, Harcourt Brace Company, New York, 1947, pp. 79-82.
- ⁴Frome, Michael, Whose Woods These Are: The Story of the National Forests, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1962, pp36-39. The third chapter of this volume, entitled "Roosevelt Faces the Public Domain", gives an excellent capsule sketch of some of the land-grab abuses which began on a large scale following the Civil War.
- ⁵Man and Nature was republished by the John Harvard Press, Cambridge Mass., in 1965.
- ⁶Ekirch, op. cit., p71.
- ⁷Lowenthal, David, George Perkins Marsh, Versatile Vermonter, Columbia University Press, New York, 1958, p70.
- ⁸Ibid. p270, quoted from Marsh's essay "The Study of Nature".
- ⁹Ibid. ,p268.
- ¹⁰Good sources for the life and times of Gifford Pinchot, the stormy leader of the early conservation movement and later Governor of Pennsylvania, are his autobiography Breaking New Ground (above), various works on Theodore Roosevelt, and the August, 1965 issue of The Journal of Forestry 63:8.
- ¹¹Pinchot, op. cit. , p29.
- ¹²Harbaugh, William Henry, Power and Responsibility, Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, New York, 1961, p334.
- ¹³Udall, , op. cit. , p146.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵"Land Grant Statesmen", editorial, Christian Century, 127:10, pp220-221.

¹⁶Journal of the General Convention, Protestant Episcopal Church In The USA, 1922, p116.

¹⁷Ekirch, op. cit., p105.

¹⁸Christian Century, V.72, 1955, p164.

CHAPTER IV

THE CURRENT SCENE IN CONSERVATION

It is evident that there is a new and vigorous interest everywhere in the United States in the conservation of our natural resources. A significant number of hitherto unconcerned Americans have suddenly become aware of the impact that 350 years of settlement has had on this land and have seen that the quality and style of life which they have enjoyed in the past may be quite radically changed if present trends in natural resource use are continued.

Two recent books in the conservation field became national best sellers, Rachel Carson's Silent Spring¹ and Stewart L. Udall's The Quiet Crisis, which we have already mentioned. Other authors in the conservation field who have enjoyed wide audience in recent years are Justice William O. Douglas² and Joseph Wood Krutch.³ Major network television productions dealing with modern conservation problems such as pollution and pesticide use have been aired during prime broadcast time.

The last two national administrations, the Kennedy and the Johnson, have directed much of their domestic policy toward two great issues: civil rights and conservation. The 88th and the first session of the 89th Congressional sessions produced more significant conservation legislation of a national scope than any

other sessions in our history.⁴ Among significant bills passed, were The Clean Air Act of 1964, The Wilderness Bill, the Water Quality Act of 1965, the Dingell-Neuberger bill on Pesticides Research, Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, legislation on highway beautification, and a new farmland retirement program. A White House conference on Natural Beauty, held in the spring of 1965, was somewhat inappropriately named as it dealt with a wide range of complex conservation issues besides natural beauty. Mrs. Lyndon Johnson showed her intense interest in the conference by attending all its working sessions and actively participating in the discussions. In 1961, the Department of Agriculture was assigned responsibility for implementing a nation-wide Rural Areas Development (RAD) Program which brings comprehensive planning to the county level throughout the U. S.

Individual citizens, to a point far beyond anything in the past have also sprung into action. Conservation and similar interest groups such as the Audubon and Wilderness Societies report record enrollments. The Sierra Club, founded by John Muir in 1892, gained 20,000 members from 1950 to 1960. Local groups, such as the Town Conservation Councils in Massachusetts, meet to plan for future land use within their local environs. More leisure time and a generally prosperous economy have resulted in a boom

in outdoor recreation which brings many people into a new contact with nature and sparks an interest in conservation matters.⁵

The Parks Department of Vermont is planning for a 300% increase in use at its camping facilities over the next ten years. Everywhere, especially among conservation professionals, the key word is planning.

The reasons for this new awareness by so many for the need of a more careful handling of our natural resources lie all around us and are evident even to the casual observer. The simple fact is that man has come to dominate, almost completely, the environment within which he lives in the United States. The marks of man are found everywhere on the land. The frontier, even in Alaska, is gone.

Everywhere he looks, man sees that his fellow man has been there before him and has in some way altered the landscape. Airline pilots, flying at night on the eastern seaboard, see an almost continuous band of city and suburban lights from Boston to Washington, D.C. Power and flood control dams are either in existence or are planned on almost every stream of any size.⁶ Botanists in the western states, who previously used railroad rights-of-way to study the last remaining natural stands of prairie flora, find that even these are disappearing as the railroads adopt

the use of weed-killer sprays. Logging roads penetrate the last virgin timber stands in the Pacific Northwest. Freeways and housing developments encroach on the dairy farms and orange groves of Southern California.

Two recent books dealing with the natural wonders of the continent comment on the impact of man: "it was our opinion by the end of the trip (covering all of the U.S.) that the United States was indeed now essentially an urban and suburban nation... with but one noticeable break on the Atlantic coast and one on the gulf, there is virtually a continuous built-up strip... the enormous spread of the cities of Texas is almost beyond belief".⁷

The other volume, which consisted of a collection of beautiful photographs of the famous wild natural areas of our country, ended with an impressive photo of an huge sprawling California suburban complex and stated in the caption: "...in every photograph in this book--whether of the plains, the mountains, or the remote deserts--one thing has been just beyond the range of the camera: a recent work of man... without enough persons who care, the rapid increase in population and the accelerating demands of an expanding civilization may have man living elbow to elbow clear across the United States by 2000 AD, and a mother by that time may be hard put to instill in her children a love for the

natural wonders and beauty of their country. "8

Not all people react the same way to these observations. Some, to be sure, see all the development as the ruination of the land and the end of the American way of life. In extreme cases, this leads to a political conservatism, an effort to stem the tide of change and to return to the simpler and freer days of the frontier. At the opposite pole, however, are those to whom the wholesale alteration of the land represents the coming of age of man, the sign of his triumph, via technology, over environmental limitations which have held him in check since the dawn of history.

The majority of citizens lie between these two poles. Their views on the meanings of these wholesale changes may be unclear, but very few would argue that such changes are not taking place at an accelerated pace or that they are insignificant to their lives. For better or worse, most would agree that their country's physical character is changing, and that a flurry of activity has erupted to either control, channel, or alter, these changes. In the minds of many people much of this latter activity comes under the heading of "conservation".

There has also been a corresponding change in the field of conservation itself. Science, which many have decried as the great despoiler of nature, has ironically provided man with an

understanding of nature which is both extensive and highly sophisticated. Each field of natural science has produced abundant research of excellent quality, the result of the modern scientific method. The field disciplines have begun extensive applications of this new knowledge. Foresters now establish "seed orchards" of genetically superior timber trees and produce seedlings by the millions for reforestation.⁹ Wildlife and fishery biologists have access to accurate and detailed life histories of the species with which they must work, and on their basis are able to make sound management decisions. Modern photographic and sound equipment allows recording of the most minute details of life processes and other natural phenomena.

Understanding of the intricate web of interdependencies which make up what is popularly called "the balance of nature" is rapidly increasing. All of the United States has been mapped and aerially photographed, some regions at a variety of scales. Mineral location and soil type maps are available for any section of the country. Modern publishing and communication techniques make all of this information readily available to the naturalist, the forester, the geologist, the agricultural expert. Modern transportation allows scientists to visit a wide range of natural sites with speed and comfort, plus the capacity for carrying with

them large amounts of equipment. All of this adds up to a vast fund of insight and knowledge into nature, a fund that is greater than ever in history.

But, just at this very time when man has the technical ability to know and understand the natural world of which he is a part he has seemingly done his utmost to either destroy or remove himself from that very world. The price we have paid for the settlement of this country has been heavy indeed. The incredible bounty before which the Pilgrims stood in 1620 has been spent. One hardly knows where to begin to catalogue the evil that America has done to her land. It is indeed a time of "quiet crisis".

First, there is the sheer alienation of man from the natural world. Most citizens over forty years of age have roots in rural or small town environments; most under that age have no such memories. With each succeeding generation our nation's ties with the land recede. For most of the youngsters of our great urban complexes this process has gone far enough so that they never question the "fact" that their milk comes from plastic cartons, their water (chlorinated) from stainless steel faucets, their food from steel cans and cellophane packages. They are only dimly, if at all, aware that behind these lie such realities as dairy cows, forested watersheds, and topsoil.

The results of this are sometimes ludicrous: two women college education majors who planned to teach biology to high school students visited a model farm of the local Audubon chapter and admitted that up to that time neither one of them had ever seen a live chicken! But, on reflection, it is not surprising that a young adult of today could live for twenty years and be removed from so much biological reality. For an increasing avalanche of concrete and asphalt covers the natural environment about which science is learning so much, effectively insulating the city dweller from any contact with nature. Even so simple a part of the landscape as an open field or an undisturbed swamp have become scarce items on the peripheries of our large cities.

Those parts of nature which have not already been covered with concrete or housing have suffered terribly anyway. Again, one hardly knows where to begin the list. . . Raw sewage, dyes, animal blood and fat, contraceptives, wool waste, oil, and toxic chemicals are only a few of the items which are daily poured into once clear rivers and harbors. A speaker at a conservation banquet in a large eastern city once succinctly, if indelicately, pointed out that the water in the glasses on the tables "had very probably been through three or four sets of human intestines up-river before reaching here".

Seaside marshes are filled and drained for housing developments, which has the double effect of removing one of the most highly efficient food producing areas and prohibiting access to the ocean for all except the immediate homeowner. Pesticides are used indiscriminately and with no thought to their ecological effects. (Montana grouse hunters in 1964 were advised to trim the fat from their bag before eating due to the chlorinated hydrocarbon levels in some birds being higher than tolerated for domestic meat; traces of dieldrin pesticide were found in bones of the rare whooping crane, DDT has been found in Antarctic penguin populations.)¹⁰ The list of animal and bird species threatened with extinction grows.¹¹

Parts of the country such as California suffer from floods and mudslides from cutover and burned off mountain slopes while other sections endure water shortages as ground and surface water levels drop and salt water enters many wells. The air over our large cities is polluted by industrial smoke and motor vehicle exhaust, to such an extent that some feel that the chemical composition of the atmosphere in such areas has become permanently damaged. 2,600 tons of solid wastes are blown into the air of Greater Boston daily.¹²

Roadsides are defaced with billboards, distracting neon signs, and garish retail business establishments, which in the attempt to lure the traveller's business, capitalize on an inaccurate and

a confusing melange of American regionalism. A "Longhorn Palace" eating establishment adorns the White Mountains of New Hampshire, while fake New England colonial architecture graces some drive-in "eateries" in the far west. The entire country lies blanketed under a bed of trash of which the metal beer can seems to be the outstanding symbol. Highway department trash removal costs are among the largest items in their maintenance budgets. Nor is the waste disposal problem confined to roadsides and festering open municipal dumps: in 1958 a volunteer group in California packed 800 pounds of non-burnable trash from a single small remote Sierra, Nevada campsite which could be reached only by a long and arduous trip by foot or pack animal.

Even the great historical sense of nature which has been every American's legacy seems strangely warped and twisted when viewed through the eyes of some widely screened television productions. Scenes supposedly taking place in the eastern or southern out-of-doors are filmed against a background of western Ponderosa pine. Feathered headdresses appear on Indians whose tribes lived hundreds of miles from those who actually used such adornment. Wigwams and tipis are treated interchangeably. Beardless cowboys in immaculate shirts swagger through stereo-

typed cattle towns firing modern assembly line revolvers which bear little resemblance to the magnificent old heavy Colt single-actions which actually "won the west". If the same cowboys ever are portrayed doing what cowboys actually did, the scene shows herds of fat modern Herford cattle in place of the rangy longhorns, and the action takes place on a salt flat or some other site far from the stands of bluestem and grama grasses which actually made the cattle empires.

Perhaps this sense of unreality in regard to biological facts has been enhanced by the fact that up to now we have never, as a nation, faced any real shortages of natural resources. We have lived well on our bounty. But the whole question of shortages of natural resources is a complex one and bears some close examination.

On April 1, 1961, a report was published which was a much needed source of information on the whole matter of adequacy of natural resource supplies in the United States. This was the 1,000 page report of the five year study by the Resources for the Future Foundation, a non-profit research group sponsored by the Ford Foundation.¹³ The report indicated that, largely because of technological advances, resources for this country for the remainder of the 20th century, and in most cases well beyond, would be in adequate supply, even in the face of a expected population of 331,000,000 and a gross national product of \$2,000,000,000,000 by

the year 2000.

To be sure, the report warned, there would be severe local shortages of various raw materials from time to time, but none of these would be impossible to overcome by planning an intelligent application of scientific discoveries. Agricultural (including forest) production, water, energy, and non-fuel minerals all would be in adequate supply when viewed on a world-wide basis (emphasis mine). The report did see the need for much larger imports of some of these commodities.

An important new principle of resource management was highlighted by these projections. Absolute shortages of a resource would not be the problem of the future. What will be the determining factor will be the rising cost of utilizing lower grade supplies of a given item. This puts the problem squarely in the hands of the technologist, whose major challenge will be to devise methods of extraction or substitution which will allow these processes to be carried on economically. All indications are that this can be done, at least for the foreseeable future, though it will be readily apparent that the cost/supply ratio will be constantly fluctuating as new methods of extraction or production are devised, or as known reserves dwindle or multiply (either directly, as in the case of the vast oil and gas reserves now being found under the sea,

or by substitution as in the case of generation of electricity by atomic power rather than fossil fuels, or the use of taconite as a source for iron ore.)

But again, this report must be looked at in the light of biological facts. At first glance to the layman, the report seems to indicate that science will be able to provide all the material needs of a good life. Desalinization of the sea can augment our domestic water needs, oil shales and tar sands will add to petroleum reserves, atomic energy will generate our electricity. All of this is quite true; despite the technical problems involved, and these must not be minimized, we shall probably be using these three innovations, plus a host of others, within a very short time.

But the conclusions of the Resources Foundation report in no way lessen the conservation problems of the 1960's or the decades to follow. The report is concerned solely with adequacy of sources of supply of materials for a consuming society. The problems of the mistreatment of the land remain and are mounting daily, as other publications of the Foundation indicate only too well.¹⁴ Technology may bring adequacy of supply, but it also brings its own hazards and threats to man's survival as a creature of nature. Technology applied to the problems of nature with no regard for other factors can have disastrous consequences.

As man's mastery over his environment increases, problems also seem to increase rather than diminish. These problems are not simply the problems of man versus environment as he has always known them, writ large, they are instead showing themselves to be entirely new types of challenges to his mastery of the earth. Technology puts man in a new relationship to nature and gives him the means to dominate it in ways that never would have occurred to him before.

Atomic power is an example. The penetration of the atom was not a straight-line development from man's earlier discoveries, as in the case of the cooking fire of the primitive to the modern steam turbine. As Professor F. S. Northrop of Yale University points out, the technology which resulted in the Atomic Age is based on man's new ability to work using the "unsensed". An atomic bomb or nuclear reactor is not capable of being conceptualized from directly observable phenomena.¹⁵ Uranium and cobalt ores have always been "natural resources" yet they are used today in entirely different ways, qualitatively as well as quantitatively, than man has ever used the stuff on the earth before. Their new use, if mis-directed might well end the life on earth of the very men who developed them. Technology of the atom may supply us with the abundant life, as the Foundation report suggests, or it might end life altogether.

Alongside the problem of the atom stands the question of exploding population as the other major threat to man, the "ecological dominant" on earth. The causes for the tremendous increase of worldwide populations are still not clearly defined, though it is certain that man's technological mastery in such areas as medicine and agriculture are contributing factors.

The spectre raised by Malthus, though now refined and modified, that population would outstrip available food supplies, with resultant mass starvation, is still very much with us. In many areas of the world such as China and especially India, the outcome would still be quite problematical, even if all the technological effort of the entire world was focussed on feeding adequately the peoples of these two countries over the next half-century. The problem of population may well prove to be the major challenge to man's existence of our time, overshadowing even the atom. The present rate of world population growth has been likened biologically to the growth of a cancer in a living organism.¹⁶ Even without adopting this radical view it seems clear that any gains in good land use that conservationists may make must sooner or later be wiped out by the inexorable growth of unchecked population.

The question of birth control is only a part of the total picture in population dynamics, but it now occupies the center of the stage in public attention in this area. Birth control is now more widely and openly discussed in this country than ever before. Arguments concerning the methods to be used in birth control have, of course, had a vital religious significance, and it is certain that Roman Catholic discussion in this area will continue and enlarge as that church seeks to define its position on contraception for this age.

But these public discussions and the increasing use of birth control by more peoples of the world should not blind one to the fact that contraception alone will not solve the population problem or lead one to think that the problem will be easily solved by any one method. We face some difficult decisions in the near future.¹⁷

The scope of this paper is limited to North America, and, of course, population densities are still low here when compared with certain other parts of the world. The average United States population figure of .38 persons per acre of tilled land is the same as that of the Soviet Union. This is fairly low when compared with the world average of .80 persons. But when figures are abstracted for the different regions of the U. S., an examination of those places where the bulk of our people live can prove startling.

The most densely settled country of the world is The Netherlands, with 906 persons per square mile. Yet, the states of Rhode Island and New Jersey are not far below this with 812 and 806 persons per square mile respectively. The density of Massachusetts exceeds that of Japan; Connecticut exceeds Italy and Ceylon; and New York exceeds Haiti and India.¹⁸

These figures alone, of course, do not prove much. The average citizen of New York State lives incomparably better than the average citizen of Haiti or India. Yet, by what means does he do this; what does it cost? The population of the United States doubled from 1900 to 1950. Yet, as William Vogt points out, when these two years are compared for resource consumption, it is seen that in 1950 we were using two and one-half times more bituminous coal, three times more copper, four times more zinc, twenty-six times more natural gas, and thirty-five times more oil!¹⁹ In 1950, we consumed one half of the entire world annual total of non-food raw materials. By 1980, we may be consuming up to 83% of these non-food materials, all to support 6% of the total world population. Even if this figure is not reached, it is clear that if the U.S. population continues to increase at the present rate of 1.5% annually, and we continue to demand our present living standard, we are going to consume more and more

of the world's total resource base. Of course, it is another question altogether as to whether the rest of the world will allow us to do this.

Many things may be done to illustrate population statistics in a dramatic manner, but all current figures indicate that there is a definite limit to how many people the world can support. The present increasing rate of growth cannot go on unchecked forever. As with the atom, population growth is an insistent challenge which will not allow itself to be ignored. Even if we isolate American population growth in theory (impossible to do in practice in a swiftly shrinking world) we are going to eventually face the question of limiting our own numbers. These will not be easy questions for Americans to answer, nor will they yield to quick answers or snap judgements. Still, difficult as it might be, someday the challenge must be faced:

The question we Americans must ask is this: How large are we going to let our population become before it stops growing, and what will be the conditions of life--in terms of diet, housing, work, play, security, freedom, and personal liberty--once this growth has ceased? How much, that is, will we have to sacrifice--materially, ethically, politically, aesthetically--here and in the rest of the world, before population growth is halted? And...by what means will numerical stability be achieved...a higher death rate...or...a lower birth rate?²⁰

These questions of atomic power and population are, along with the more obvious ones of water and air pollution, soil erosion, harmful mining practices, wilderness preservation, insecticide contamination of food etc., conservation. They affect man as he lives in his habitat, the earth. While it might be argued that this is too broad a definition of conservation, that it puts almost every environmental aspect of man and earth under its scope, I would submit that this is exactly a point of departure for this study.

In the modern world we are, as never before, "members one of another". What happens to the earth in one quarter of the world will inevitably affect the lives of people in far distant areas, and also the lives of those who will be born long after us. As never before, man's use of the earth has far-reaching, in some cases irreversible, consequences.

It is precisely in this area of definition that a departure for fruitful study of the relationship of Christianity to the conservation movement may lie. For today men are not quite sure what either the words "Christianity" or "Conservation" mean in their fullest sense. Old definitions of both are being discarded as the struggle for new ones goes on. As mentioned before, the church is in violent upheaval at this time, out of this will come a re-definition of the meaning of "Church".

In the field of conservation also there is a current lack of definition and this is viewed in some quarters as being very desirable. In his Editor's Introduction to an excellent collection of essays in conservation fields, Mr. Henry Jarrett, of the Resources For the Future Foundation, states that one of the strengths of the English and American peoples is their ability to rise above the need for strict definition when a pragmatic need occurs.²¹ One of the largest pragmatic needs we face at this time are solutions to the problems which arise as man's dominance over the earth becomes more complete.

Vice Admiral Hyman Rickover of the U.S. Navy spoke of this need recently in a paper sponsored by the British Association for the Advancement of Science.²² Admiral Rickover called for an "ethical bulwark" to be erected as a defense against the irresponsible uses of technology which threaten to ruin the earth as a habitation for man. This call for a new ethic in the use of resources is being heard from an increasing number of people; it forms a large part of the "New Conservation".

Ethical questions concerning population control and the use of the atom have been widely debated by different segments of the Church. But what of other matters concerning man's relationship with the earth? What are the ethical and moral questions in, for

example, the matter of air pollution? Does the Church have anything to say about hunting as a sport? Is mass pollution of rivers and harbors as culpable a corporate sin as say racial segregation or political corruption? Is man morally responsible to do all that he can to save the grizzly, the trumpeter swan, the California condor, from extinction? Is the Church itself a logical source for the "ethical bulwark" called for by Admiral Rickover?

The second half of this paper takes the view that the Christian faith has some positive insights to offer the conservation movement, and that the Church should be involved in this movement much more than it now is. It also takes the view that the Church has much to learn from those who have dedicated themselves to the cause of conservation. Some surprises on both sides may emerge. The conservationist who is a non-Christian, or who has found little thus far in his faith to enforce his conservation philosophy, may see that the Judeo-Christian tradition has some of the keys to his own "ecological philosophy" for which he may be looking.

Similarly, the churchmen who have tended to scorn those whom they call "nature lovers" or "bird watchers" may find that in their zeal to have men glorify God in the right place ie., in church, they have been ignoring a part of the nature of man that really does "find God" out of doors. The conservation philosophies

of the American greats: John Muir, Thoreau, the Muries, Sigurd Olson, Aldo Leopold, all have spoken to the needs of man and his environment in deeply religious terms. It is a telling fact on the Church that few of these men have been practicing Christians.

Christianity and conservation, along with many other parts of our life, are in a current state of revolution. Revolutions can be truly humbling experiences for those caught up in them, and if anything new is offered from the Christian tradition to the conservationist, it more than likely will be a new insight of the Church also. This is not a one-way street; the Christian who becomes deeply involved in conservation also has a great opportunity to deepen and broaden his own faith in the God who has given him dominion over the earth.

Thou makest him to have dominion of the works
of thy hands, and thou hast put all things
in subjection under his feet:
All sheep and oxen; yea and all the beasts of the field;
The fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea;
and whatsoever walk through the paths
of the seas. (Psalm 8: 6-8)

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

¹Carson, Rachel, Silent Spring, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1962.

²A recent work containing the Justice's conservation philosophy is A Wilderness Bill Of Rights, Little, Brown, and Co., Boston, 1965. 192pp. Justice Douglas is an impassioned writer on conservation matters, but his facts occasionally bear careful scrutiny.

³Krutch's nature philosophy is somewhat wryly stated in The Twelve Seasons, William Sloane Associates, New York, 1949, 188pp.

⁴Journal of Forestry, 63:12 December 1965, p. 952.

⁵The writer spoke with a Pennsylvania steel mill worker vacationing in northern New England in 1965, who had three months annual paid vacation which he planned to use camping and fishing.

⁶A Bill to set up a Wild Rivers Preservation System was approved by a Senate committee late in 1965, but committee hearings in the House had not yet been held at the time of this writing.

⁷Brower, David, editor, Wildlands in Our Civilization, Sierra Club, San Francisco, 1964, p106.

⁸American Heritage Publishing Company, op. cit., p378.

⁹Frome, op. cit., p118.

¹⁰National Wildlife Federation, Conservation News, 29:22, November 15, 1964, p7.

¹¹U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife Circular 223, Survival Or Surrender For Endangered Wildlife, 1965. Some major species "whose prospects for survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy" include: the Florida Key Deer, grizzly bear, whooping crane, ivory-billed woodpecker (may already be extinct), Florida Everglades Kite, and the Hawaiian Goose (State bird of Hawaii).

¹²Personal communication with James Ayres, Conservation Editor for the Boston Globe.

¹³ New York Times, March 31, 1961 . This report was published in book form by the John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, in 1961. The Resources for the Future Foundation received a \$1,100,000 grant from the Ford Foundation in 1965 for environmental research projects bearing on conservation.

¹⁴ Annual reports of the Foundation are available from the headquarters in Washington, D.C.

¹⁵ Northrop, F. S. , "Man's Relation to the Earth In Its Bearing On His Aesthetic, Ethical, and Legal Values" in Thomas, William, editor, op. cit. , pp 1052-1067.

¹⁶ Vogt, William, People! Challenge To Survival, William Sloane Assoc. , 1960, 257 pp.

¹⁷ For a representative debate between the Neo-Malthusian school and its opponents, see Vogt, op cit. (above), and de Castro, Josue, The Geography of Hunger, Little Brown, Boston, 1952, 337 pp.

¹⁸ Day, Lincoln, H. , and Alice, T. , Too Many Americans , Houghton Mifflin Co. , Boston, 1964, p23.

¹⁹ Vogt, op. cit. , pp79-80.

²⁰ Day and Day, op. cit. , p7.

²¹ Jarrett, Henry, editor, Perspectives On Conservation, John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1958, pIX.

²² New York Times , October 28, 1965, Section C, p45.

CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH AND CONSERVATION I:
SOME ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It has perhaps become clear to the reader thus far that many of the conservation problems America faces are ethical problems. If we accept the definition of ethics as that having to do with the moral duty and obligation of man, we can begin to see what men such as Aldo Leopold are calling for in his demand for a "new land ethic".¹ It is nothing less than a new sense of moral duty and obligation toward the land and the forms of life which live on it. It is a call for man, increasingly immersed in the "secular city", to turn and look with new insight, reverence, and respect, on the land which gives him life. As has been shown above, professional land managers and conservationists either have at hand, or are rapidly gaining, the ecological understanding necessary to the best use of a given land area. Technical problems can be solved. The question thus becomes: will this knowledge be put into practice? Can we create a sense of duty and urgency in American citizens toward good land use? What are the best means for accomplishing this end?

Thus far, in American history, the trend has not been one of governmental coercion. Even in 1966, when the increasingly centralized role of the federal government has become widely accepted, there is a surprising lack of government regulation of most resource use. This often is a source of genuine surprise to foreign visitors to the United States.

Exploding populations or shorter-term crises such as severe local shortages in a certain location may well reverse this trend, it is true. The strict conservation laws in force in the oil fields of the Southwest are a case in point. There are signs that much wider spread government control in the resource field is close upon us, despite a long history of laissez-faire attitudes. Severe government pressure on private industry is already seen in such areas as wage and price controls, and is even now beginning to be exerted in the fight against water pollution.

There are at least two major reasons why the conservationist, regardless of his personal political philosophy, cannot relax and wait for an increasing governmental role in regulating land and resource use. These two factors are among the major ones why the Church must become active in the conservation field, and why a sense of corporate stewardship must be formulated among all the American people.

The first is that the place of private ownership and control of property in this country is secure and not likely to change, at least for the foreseeable future. The legal right of a man to do as he will with his land, within very broad and flexible limits, is well established. This concept of private control has been tested and challenged by some conservationists, it is true. The full significance of the battles waged in Washington during the late 1930's and 1940's by proponents of legislation to establish federal control over timber cutting on private forest land, has never been fully realized by the American public. A series of bills toward that end were filed during almost every legislative session during those years. If any of them had passed, the Federal government, probably represented by the U.S. Forest Service, would have begun to exercise legal control over a huge portion of the American landscape. Actually, support for some of this legislation was quite strong. In an unofficial referendum conducted in 1949 among professional foresters, a group usually politically conservative since World War II, the principle of federal regulation of cutting was rejected by a slightly better than a two to one margin.² Unlike the majority of foresters, Gifford Pinchot, who still commanded huge respect among congressmen strongly supported much of this type of legislation.

From the early 1950's on, the trend has been for federal-state cooperation in encouraging voluntary conservation establishment among private landowners. Of particular significance has been the Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP) administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Payments are made to landowners for such practices as soil erosion control, water conservation, tree planting, timber stand improvement, and establishment of permanent grassland soil covers. All of this is voluntary, there are few penalties for non-compliance, and an owner may withdraw from the program at any time. It is quite possible, for example, for a woodlot owner to receive, over a period of years, thousands of dollars in ACP payments on his woodland for improvement work, and then cut his forest ruthlessly and with no regard to established principles of conservation. Thus far, we as a nation, have been willing to accept these occasional abuses as part of the price for freedom of property, and it is quite likely that we shall continue to accept them and to uphold this freedom for some time to come. Thus, a sense of individual, voluntary, respect for the need of good land practice is vital on the American rural scene.

The second major reason why conservationists cannot simply wait for more strict governmental control and intervention, and why wise use of the land must become an ethical concept of all citizens, is that government, of itself, is not always the best judge of what constitutes best land use. Conflicting interests and loyalties between government agencies many times results to the land. These abuses range from the small and relatively insignificant to these of huge proportion. For example, an employee of the Federal Housing Authority (traditionally, in New England at least, known as "last resort" loan sources for hard-pressed farmers) may urge a dairyman holding an F. H. A. mortgage on a new barn to devastate a fine farm woodlot to reduce his indebtedness to F. H. A. In the prairie states, for years, there was the anomaly of some federal and state agencies subsidizing wetland drainage for more wheat land, while other departments were desperately trying to restore marsh and pothole areas in the face of drastically reduced waterfowl nesting sites.

Finally, on a truly huge scale, there is the current Corps of Engineers proposal to dam the Yukon River at the Ramparts in northeastern Alaska, thus creating the largest artificial lake in the world. Government conservation agencies are almost unanimous in condemning this project as a huge waste of some

of the most productive wilderness wildlife habitat in the world.³

It is evident that other criteria than dollar value, immediate financial gain, or departmental prestige, are needed in making decisions concerning use of the land. In short, an ethic, a land ethic, which will stand above these other factors, and inform the decisions to be made. Such an ethic must, of course, take into consideration the immediate needs of the landowner, but also the best biological information available, and the present and future needs and demands of society as a whole, all undergirded by a strong sense of respect and love for the land which gives us life. Has the Church anything to contribute to the formulation of such an ethic? Three areas will be examined in answering this question: 1. the ethics of private property; 2. the true place of profit and money; and 3. respect and reverence for life.

Private Property

First, since so much of our land and resources are privately owned, particularly in the heavier settled eastern and coastal regions of the nation, it might be well to look at the Christian view of the right and privileges of private ownership of property. Pope Pius XI, in his Encyclical Quadragesimo Anno, in 1931, stated that the right to own private property has been given by

God himself. Certainly many Protestants, especially in view of the Calvinist traditions of work and property, feel the same way. But a recent Anglican study of moral theology by Herbert Waddams questions this assumption, and states that the arguments given in favor of property as a God-given "right" are unsupportable.⁴ Thomas Aquinas, for example, gave three reasons for the necessity of private property under the "natural law". They are, in the words of Canon Waddams:

1. Man is more ready to get something for himself than for someone else because he is naturally lazy.
2. Human affairs are better managed when each man has his own particular responsibility, so that everyone is not responsible for everything.
3. Private property promotes peace when every man is content with what he has, and continual quarrels arise when possessions are held in common. (Summa Theol. 5 II-II Q. 6, A. 2)

All three of these arguments of Aquinas prevail, according to Waddams, because of the failures in man: avariciousness, selfishness, self-interest, rather than the good. Thus, according to the traditional terminology of moral theology, the arguments themselves show that private property is good only in a relative sense, ie. it promotes good virtues in men. If it is thus a relative moral good, then it can hardly be an inalienable right, endowed

by the Creator.⁶

What practical difference does this make? At first glance perhaps, little. For example, government readily will condemn private land where it judges it to be in the public interest, such as for highway and power transmission rights-of-way. When this occurs, there is very seldom appeal to God-given right of property, but only insistence on a just compensation for the owner. And yet, as Waddams points out:

"... it makes a good deal of difference to the readiness of men and women to consider changes. If men already own property, they are reluctant enough to allow changes for the benefit of the common society in which they live, but if they are also able to buttress this reluctance by an appeal to the natural law, it will be a serious obstacle to the changes which ought to be made."

This statement clearly points out the dangers we run in holding our present concept of private property. It is too easy for a man or a corporation to justify, for example, the devastation of the woodland they control if they believe that control to be exercised by divine right. Theoretically, it should be less easy for them to justify by similar argument a harmful practice which encroaches on the property of others. Divine right of property, if it exists at all, should extend to all owners. But in practice, as every conservationist knows, some rights are apparently more

divine than others. A paper mill may discharge dye and sulfite liquor wastes into a nearby river, thus grossly polluting it. Communities downstream suffer from the harm done to recreation and water supplies. It would seem that of all the arguments the paper firm might muster in defense of its practice, the appeal to the right of private property might be the weakest, for only a relatively short stretch of the river actually belongs to the company.

Yet, as every pollution control official has sadly learned, the unspoken "divine right" of private property, the rule that every landowner may do as he pleases, is one of the major reasons why downstream communities fail to protest. Chances are that the paper mill has been there a long time, and the "right" to pollute is long established. Then too, the threat of loss of local pay-rolls can usually be held against surrounding towns if they protest too much. Most important, the downstream town is probably dumping its raw sewage into the same stream, and feels that its "right" to do so would be put in jeopardy if the private property concept of the paper plant was challenged. Thus, the status quo is maintained and the evil compounded with each mile traveled downstream. Each polluter see himself as a solitary unit, jealously exercising his right to private property.

It is not the task of the Church to identify itself with any single theory of land ownership, and to call that way "Christian". Even if this were desirable for Christians themselves, it would be impossible and presumptuous in a pluralistic society. In the words of one writer on Christian ethics:

It is obvious that the Church as a whole cannot and should not identify itself with any particular economic system or program, not only because of the difference between Christians on economic issues, but also because the Church as such does not possess the technical knowledge necessary for the solution of economic problems.⁸

The writer goes on to say that it is the task of the Church to create a new economic spirit, in the light of its own teachings, and certainly this should include a far more positive and demanding ethic regarding the ownership of property than the usual jealous "guarding of a divine right" approach. William Temple, the great Christian social thinker, did much to influence contemporary English thinking on land ownership in that overcrowded island with its long history of private property held under the common law. In his notable book Christianity and the Social Order, first published in 1942, he stated his passionate beliefs in land ownership.

Land is not a mere "material resource". The phrase "mother earth" stands for a deep truth about the relationship between man and nature; and this is most fully developed

where a man owns land which he works himself and works land which he owns. But he must own it in the sense mentioned-- not as a possessor of so much material resources, but as a steward and trustee for the community. Land not beneficially used should involve liability to fine, or in extreme cases, to forfeiture. But if the necessary safeguards are established, the best results are to be expected from a policy of occupying ownership.

But in no case should land be regarded as a purely personal possession. How often we hear of an estate being "mortgaged up to the hilt" because some heir to the property was a wastrel! It should be made illegal for an owner... to mortgage land or to burden it with debt... Overburdened estates should be compulsorily liquidated.⁹

Much of Temple's language, though only twenty-five years old, may seem strangely harsh, and more attuned to the handling of the countless small land holdings existing in Britain than to a modern technological, corporation society of the U.S. Yet his principles are valid for our country and our time. The Christian Church should make it unmistakably clear for its own followers that ownership by them of land and property entails obligations as well as rights. Certainly basic to that obligation should be the injunction, implicit in the Jewish Law at the 25th Chapter of Leviticus, to turn the land over to the next generation in as good or better condition than it was received. Since it is fairly obvious, when viewed in historical perspective, that "divine right" private property theories have led, at times, to an exploitive, laissez-

faire, individualism, this danger must constantly be pointed out as part of Christian teaching.

There are current signs that the Roman Catholic Church is seeking to modify its "divine right" theory of property. Father Bernard Haring, a Roman Catholic moral theologian, in a recent volume re-states the principles of Quadragesimo Anno, but also states the way in which property rights should be viewed.

Christian principles relating to the social-economic order and man's right to property are based on a common-sense approach to existing realities and on man's essential freedom and sense of responsibility. Neither an excessive public control nor an unbridled liberalism is in conformity with the nature of man and society.¹⁰

The situation on the American Protestant side is more problematical. It is probably not unfair to point out that the "divine right" private property theory has been a hallmark of the traditional conservative Protestant landowner class "Establishment" in this country. Although the theory that *laissez-faire* capitalism is a direct result of the Protestant 16th Century Reformation is an extremely complex one, and has been sharply challenged,¹¹ this form of economic philosophy has been connected with Protestantism. In the U.S., this was especially true during the 19th and early 20th Centuries.

There are, however, abundant signs of a change. For one thing, the "Protestant Establishment", if there was such a thing, is waning as we enter a truly pluralistic society. Then, the sheer vastness of modern industrial and agricultural enterprise points up the absurdity of some of the older ideas on property, for example, the notion that property somehow "fulfills" a man. As one writer has asked, "In what possible sense can Henry Ford's River Rouge plant be said to be necessary to his personality, to his personal integrity, in the way that his home and books and personal motorcar unquestionably are his "own"?¹² In the same vein, we might ask in what sense does the New York City resident who bought 7,000 acres of Vermont timberland, "own" that land? Does this "fulfill" him, say, ten times more than 700 acres?

Certainly the great participation by many Protestant and Roman Catholic Christians, along with their Jewish and secularist friends, in such social issues as the Civil Rights movement and the problems of the inner city are going to involve the question of property. In New York City a few years ago, an Episcopal priest broke the padlocks which had been placed on a slum apartment's gas and electric meters because of the landlord's failure to pay his bills. Technically, the priest violated the right of private property in restoring heat and light to the suffering tenants.

In court, however, the priest was exonerated and called perfectly justified.¹³ The question in some conservation circles now is, how long will it be before someone (most likely the federal government) breaks into the right of private property of the power company owners whose smokestacks belch carbon wastes into the air, or the real estate developer who bulldozes off valuable topsoil, and crowds as many cheaply-built houses as he dares onto a hitherto pleasant tract of farmland. Like the utility company in New York, such owners of property may technically be in the right, but certainly not morally. Such persons may seek to justify abuse of the environment by appeal to inalienable property rights, but they should gain no support or comfort from the Church in such an appeal. Dr. Joseph Fletcher, in a volume on "Christianity and Property" has stated why.

The doctrine of creation, as the Old Testament ethic drew from it, involves the view that property rights are relative, derivative, conditional; property rights are only a delegation of God's Lordship of all that he has produced and is still producing through all the subordinate agencies of nature and man. For this reason, all rights to and possession of property values, be they scarce or plentiful, are stewardly. "All things come of Thee, O Lord; and of Thine own have we given Thee," is the liturgical offertory sentence with precisely this meaning. It applies to the land and the capital which is drawn from the land. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof".¹⁴

It is this concept of Christian stewardship which must undergird a Christian land ethic. The Church must constantly remind men of the true terms of ownership. In the same way that much Christian teaching reminds man that his life is not his own and may be taken from him at any time, so must this concept be applied to land ownership. This is no diatribe against private ownership per se. Ownership may be positive good, according to the use made of it. The owner of the 7,000 acres of Vermont woodland may have bought it with the aim of applying to it the best form of land use possible, commensurate with the needs of society. If, for instance, it is to be scientific forestry, his control of the land will allow him to do this. He will have exercised his privilege of property ownership well.

Nor is this a polemic against large land holdings, in and of themselves. The 7,000 acre tract is far more economically sound for forestry than would be ten 700 acre smaller forest ownerships. And to split it even further, perhaps into 700 ten acre ski lodge sites, while this might spread the ownership among that many more people, might not thus necessarily be a "better" use. In this particular instance, the loss to the year-round lumber industry, the sewage disposal and water supply problems of 700 ski lodges, the destroying of peaceful solitude; all would have to be taken into

consideration. But, at the same time, the large owner cannot mask land abuse under corporate anonymity. He is as fully and personally responsible for good land stewardship on each of his 7,000 acres as is the camp owner with his ten. He cannot hide behind a company charter or corporation name, as was sharply illustrated in civil law a few years ago by the jail sentences given to officers of the General Electric Company for price-fixing. Church teaching on individual responsibility for land stewardship certainly cannot be less specific or demanding than that. It is perhaps appropriate to close this section on Christian teaching on private property with a prayer from St. Anselm's Teaching on Property (ca. 1100 AD) which Dr. Joseph Fletcher chose as part of the forward to the volume mentioned above, which he edited.

O Eternal God, one Father of all, who teachest us by reason that all the riches of the world are made by Thee for man's common use, and that by natural law not one of them belongs to one man more than to another; direct us, we pray Thee, in obedience to Thy law, that all things may serve all men, to the increase of Thy glory; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Profit and Money

The second major area of ethical concern for the Christian conservationist is an outgrowth of the concept of private property, and concerns money and profit. As we have seen in the historical survey of natural resource exploitation, money has been the chief factor in determining land policy. This changed only with the withdrawal of part of the public lands from settlement in the West. Then, for the first time in our history, land, on a significant scale, was removed from immediate development in order to provide for future generations.

Aside from these public lands, the bulk of which are still in the West, most of America's natural resources are subject to exploitation (the word here used in a non-pejorative sense) by private owners. An examination here then, of some Christian thinking in regard to money and profit as a motive for exploitation is perhaps desirable.

"In large areas of the West, especially in North America and Western Europe, the impression is given that success in life consists exclusively in making profits or doing well financially".¹⁵ Whether one agrees that such a situation is desirable, or not, one pretty much has to state that the above is a fairly accurate picture of the American economic structure.

As in the case of private property, it makes a great deal of difference whether we regard profit as a God-given right or as a relative quality. In the latter case, any good or evil attached to it comes through its attributes: motive and use made of money, means used to obtain it, etc. In commenting on this, the Christian Church is unanimous in condemning the confusion of money with an end; treating it as a goal in itself. But, if we look at America, we must conclude that we come dangerously close to making money a god, ie., using it as the only means of informing our various decisions on use of the land. What will it cost? How much can I get? Will it make money?

The harried conservationist certainly sees this as true. Time and again, he sees a conservation project nullified or abandoned because it will cost more or bring less return than a more destructive, quick-profit, method. Time and again, he is convinced of the truth of the slang expression "money talks".

Real estate developers in eastern Massachusetts, an area hit by severe drought in the past few years, become what is known in the house-building trade as "swamp rats", and buy low cost marsh and flood plain lands to fill in for housing development. It would be far better from an ecological standpoint to erect developments according to geological standards, building on the

rocky uplands, leaving the fertile lowlands for farms and green belts, and the untouched swamps and marshes as valuable water retention sites. But, it is the "swamp rat" method which allows the largest profit with the least investment in land and excavation.¹⁶

In January 1963, 2700 acres of unspoiled woodland, streams, and ponds, belonging to the US Navy, was declared surplus.¹⁷

The area lies about fifteen miles south of the huge metropolitan Boston complex, and it is estimated that some 2,000,000 persons live within a twenty mile radius of the area. The flora and fauna of this reservation are, as one report describes, "unique and irreplaceable". They include several magnificent stands of eastern hemlock forest, which has all but disappeared from eastern Massachusetts.

Federal law allows, and encourages, the transfer of surplus government properties to States, for conservation and recreation purposes. But the General Services Administration, which handles such surplus property, has held up transfer in this case to the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has evinced interest in the area as a test site. The NASA is currently one of the "big money" agencies of the Federal government. Though there are alternate sites for a test area which are already stripped of their

natural cover, this particular area is quite likely to be taken.

Local business leaders are pressuring the government in favor of NASA's acquisition, despite the fact that such a short-sighted view fails to recognize that there are no alternative comparable natural areas left near Boston; when this one is gone it will be irrevocably gone. The recreational needs of two million people are subordinated to immediate economic gain of a relatively few.

A few miles west of Boston, a fight is currently in progress to save a mile-long stretch of esker, or glacial ridge, from exploitation for gravel by a building contractor.¹⁸ The ridge is an excellent hiking area and carries sections of fine central New England hardwood forest. The issue, again, is clear: the conservationists require \$50,000 to buy the ridge and place it under permanent protection; they have, at this time, a little over \$1,000. A local contractor is steadily buying sections of the gravel ridge. It is likely that he will eventually have the whole ridge, since he is gaining profit from the gravel which he can re-invest in more of the land. Soon, if matters go on this way, there will be another huge gash in the countryside; more acres to add to the raw, sterile, blighted land that has become so much a part of the outer periphery of America's large cities.

Now these three cases were not selected because they are in any way unique to New England. On the contrary, they are all too typical of the steady, often unspectacular erosion of the American natural environment which is occurring in all sections of the country as dollar interests remain the ruling standard in making land-use decisions. At the opposite end of the country for example, in California, a recent author has stated that "It seems incredibly difficult to put (good land use plans) into operation, even when the need is obvious. The small entrepreneur who wants to build his pizza parlor, fruit stand, or used-car lot in the orange groves outside the city limits still seems to have undue support from the county authorities."¹⁹ He also speaks of the pressures created by the prevailing economic standards.

Conservation is everybody's business. But what goes under that name today is often a piecemeal, stopgap activity that is often too late, and usually too little. It stands too often in the path of what is called progress, and thus arouses the ire of those concerned with moneymaking. Conservationists find themselves always in the desperate position of trying to impose some control over an activity that is already under way, or of trying to save some piece of land or scenery against the opposition of powerful pressure groups. Always their activities seem beside the point to those involved in the main business of our society.²⁰

It certainly should be the duty of the Church to help inform consciences in helping them to a decision on land use. The conservationists, in the cases near Boston described above, are trying to present a case for the preserving of an area of land in its natural state, believing that this will be "for the greater good, for the greater number, in the long run". They are saying that the future (and present) urban generations of a city such as Boston will be poorer if there are no open wild spaces close by. It is a calculated value judgement, not a sentimental special pleading. The conservationist is not saying that man should revert to a more primitive state and do without house lots, rockets, and gravel banks. He is saying that in these particular cases the greater good demands that these areas be saved from development.

These are specific cases on which the Church could help in rendering a judgement. It certainly can not afford to think less about the welfare of future generations than the conservationist. Most important, the Church could help to instill a sense of responsibility and stewardship for all citizens concerning their natural environment, much as it has tried to do so in the area of the urban slum. Above all, the Church, if it is to be true to its own teaching, must challenge the assumption that the making of money is the highest national goal of the United States.

A large part of the foundation for a Christian land ethic should be the dethroning of money as a false god. Money is not evil of itself, of course. To say this would be a betrayal of the freedom man has to find evil or good in the way he uses the gifts of this world. Huge sums of money are needed to accomplish good ends such as medical research and urban renewal. Conservation too, costs money; the U.S. Public Health Service has granted \$4 million to Washington University for research in overcoming environmental problems;²¹ the Ford Foundation gave \$1.5 million to the Save-The Redwoods League in 1965.²² But just to compare this figure with the current expenses for national defense or space exploration shows again our scale of values.

There are times when the Church has stood sharply over and against the prevailing culture, as Richard Niebuhr has shown in his Christ and Culture.²³ Perhaps now it must do this in America by condemning the practice of allowing money interests alone to decide how our land is to be used. Too often, at least by surface appearances, the Church identifies itself with that very aspect of our culture which thoughtlessly despoils the bounty which God provided on this continent.

The writer recently observed a suburban shopping center near a large city. The superhighway nearby was dangerously overcrowded with speeding vehicles. Exhaust fumes filled the air with a blue haze. A large incinerator behind the shopping center was sending acrid black smoke into an already smoggy sky. Huge, garish neon signs exhorted passers-by not to miss the current "sales". In the center of the wilderness of soot, asphalt, smog, burning rubber, plate glass, and neon, stood a denominational "chapel", complete with an aluminum steeple.

While one must seriously congratulate that particular part of Christ's Church for attempting to be where the people are, and for having the foresight to try new kinds of urban ministry, one still might question whether or not there was too close an identification of Christ and culture here. Would the Church have been ministering to its people in a far higher sense if it had asked five years ago whether such a shopping center was needed at all? If it had participated in over-all land use planning for the metropolitan area? If it had stated its conviction that natural surroundings are just as important for body and soul as the interior of a chapel?

Would the Church have better prepared men for eternal life, and for the mystery of knowing themselves as children of God, by fighting to preserve the fifty acres of rolling farmland and tidal river bank, now all submerged under parking spaces? It is most probable, of course, that this particular shopping center would have been built at this location whether or not the Church had protested. Yet, how much of a betrayal of the deepest needs of man is the apparent acquiescence of the Church to such poor land planning?

Relative to the matter of profit and money (also well illustrated by any modern shopping center) is the question of consumption of goods. It is an interesting commentary on the Hebrew-Christian doctrine of the "whole man" that one of the most familiar personifications of our people is known as the "American Consumer". There seems to be a tacit assumption that more and greater consumption means a greater and more successful nation.

An advertisement of a large telephone equipment manufacturer showed a field of the most fertile middle-western soil on one side of a magazine page, and on the other that same field filled with new development housing. The message of the ad was that the company was doing its best to keep up with the demand for communications equipment caused by our exploding population, but there was little attempt to conceal the glee that

the resulting huge profits were bringing. One might question such unbounded glee when one realizes that we are apparently the only nation in the world that can afford to bury its best agricultural land under sprawling, poorly planned, housing developments.

Part of conservation, part of the means of good stewardship should be the careful watching of how we create needs. Is it really necessary for the American rate of consumption, per capita, to go up indefinitely? Does this guarantee us a higher life? A friend, who has recently come to this country from Hungary, said that the major surprise in the Vermont countryside for him, was the huge number of beer bottles beside the roads as the winter snows melted. Does Hungary, therefore, have a lower standard of living because it cannot afford, as yet, to throw away its beer bottles? Conversely, do we live better because we can? Is the amount of material we can afford to waste the measure of our living standard? The President's Materials Policy Commission, in 1952, thought the danger of this was present, and challenged the assumption.

The United States has been lavish in the use of its materials... Vast quantities of materials have been wasted by over-designing and over-specification. We have frequently designed products with little concern for getting maximum service from their

materials and labor. We drive heavier automobiles than is necessary for mere transportation, and we adorn them with chromium. . . We blow thousands of tons of unrecoverable lead into the atmosphere each year from high octane gasoline because we like a quick pickup. We must become aware that many of our production and consumption habits are extremely expensive of scarce materials and that a trivial change of taste or slight reduction₂₄ in personal satisfaction can often bring about tremendous savings.

The Church certainly has alternatives to offer to the picture of man as a mere consumer of goods. It must protest this prostitution of the good things of this world. It must make clear the sin involved in maintaining a high rate of consumption in the face of world needs. We have already seen that to achieve such consumption, we annually use 50 % of total world goods, to satisfy only 6% of world population, and that that rate of annual consumption is rising rapidly. The ethical implications should be clear. David prayed, saying: "O Lord, our God, all this abundance we have provided. . . comes from thy hand and is all thy own" (I Chronicles 29:16). Jesus himself had little doubt about the consumption of goods for its own sake.

And he said to them, "Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not lie in the abundance of his possessions". And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and

my goods. And I will say to my soul Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry. '

But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is he who lays up treasures for himself, and is not rich toward God. " (Luke 12:13-21 RSV)

The heart of the Christian view toward money and consumption lies here. Jesus is not speaking as a recluse or a hater of the world and possessions. We must recall that it was John the Baptist and not Jesus who wore rough clothes and lived in the desert. Jesus used things; his opponents accused him of being a glutton and a wine-bibber. He did not warn against laying up treasure because wealth of itself is evil, the key words in the passage above are "he who lays up treasures for himself".

If Americans continue to view consumption of goods for themselves and for the sake of "building the economy", with no thought to other peoples or to what such consumption is doing to our natural resources, then we may well ask if we are "rich toward God". Any suggestion that it is "patriotic" to buy luxuries that are not needed, any hint that "planned obsolescence" of commodities is condoned must not be allowed to justify itself under economic strategy. Too much is at stake. Our present living standard has cost this country and the world dearly in resources. Great

benefits have resulted from this, it is true, not the least being that we have been able to contribute in a major way to such evils as Nazism. The successful use of the Marshall Plan in Europe is also due, in part, to the heavy use of our own resources.

But it is easy for us to lose sight of what we are about with our money and our growing economy. It would perhaps be appropriate for the Church to celebrate the beginning of each new fiscal year on July 1 by using the following prayer from an Elizabethan Prayer Book, again part of the forward to Christianity and Property:²⁵

O God our Father, in whom we know that those ensnared in penury of things needful for the body cannot set their minds on Thee, on the poor. . . Thou, O Lord, providest enough for all men, and Thy goodness is common to all; we, by our greediness, have disordered Thy world; give Thou meat to the hungry and drink to the thirsty. . . and give Thou hope and courage to them that are out of heart. . . for Thine only Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

We have indeed "disordered" God's world by our greed. The evidence lies all around us: a stripped-out coal bank in West Virginia, a Negro sharecropper's sickly fields in Alabama, polluted air over Los Angeles and New York, acres of dreary "Levittowns" on Long Island and in New Jersey. The conservation movement seeks to atone for, and correct these effects of the

evil we have done to the land. The instilling of a true Christian view of money, profit, and consumption of materials, by the Church, would be a true act of service in support of this movement.

Reverence For Life

Three current controversies, each occurring in widely separated areas of the United States, are representative of a basic argument in approach to the use of natural resources. One of these has already been alluded to above, the plan to dam the Yukon River in Alaska, thus creating the largest artificial lake in the world.²⁶ The second is the so-called Lower Colorado River Basin Project of the Bureau of Reclamation, which plans a series of dams, reservoirs, pipelines, pumping stations, and aqueducts, to bring water from the Colorado River to central Arizona. This plan, if put in operation, would flood part of the Grand Canyon, a possibility which has been haunting nature lovers for years.²⁷ The third controversy evolves from two current Corps of Engineers projects in Florida: a huge flood control and land reclamation project in South Florida at the northern end of the Everglades National Park, and a trans-Florida barge canal.

Proponents of these two projects point out that Florida has plenty of land for all uses; 30 million acres of undeveloped land out of a state total of 34.7 million. Those opposed point to the damage which will be done to the National Park by severe water drawdown, and by the needless invasion of wildlife and bird habitat by the barge canal.²⁸

Each of these conservation, though widely separated geographically, are characterized as "the buck vs. beauty", "progress vs. stagnation", or, "people vs. animals"²⁹ The attempt is made, in the name of humanitarianism, to polarize the issues of conservation so that it may seem that the welfare of persons is set over against the maintenance of wildlife, scenic values, or recreation areas. The inference is that conservation activities are all right only as long as the needs of people, defined by economics alone, are not infringed upon. When conflict comes, the issue is never in doubt, "business comes first". The issue is painted as being either black or white.

Thus, a few years ago, the correspondence column of a national sportsmen's magazine contained this query to the editor: "Would you advocate birth control just so (sic) your hunters and fishermen could have more rabbits to shoot and fish to catch? Answer yes or no, don't beat around the bush!" Thus deprived

of the chance to answer a glaring non-sequiter and teach a lesson in ecology, the editor, quite naturally, was forced to say "No".

The same type of reasoning that prompted the above letter writer apparently motivates such statements as that of Mr.

George Sundborg, aide to Senator Ernest Gruening of Alaska, who, in speaking of the 30,000 square miles of prime wildlife habitat to be inundated under the Ramparts Dam on the Yukon, called it worthless since it contained "not more than ten flush toilets" And, after all, he went on "Are you for ducks or for people?"³⁰ It is the line of reasoning which caused a group of clergymen in the Boston area some ten years ago in opposing population control to state: "By their (birth control advocates) standards, the United States was overpopulated when the buffalo roamed the West". By implication, thus, man (complete with flush toilets) is the highest creature on earth, and all who propose measures that would slow his immediate and unhindered development, regardless of its effects on his fellow-creatures, are sentimentalists or obscurantist romantics, unwilling to face the hard facts of a real world.

Does the issue have to be drawn as "people vs. animals"? Historically, at least in the West, man's immediate welfare has been put first, regardless of the consequences to other

creatures. Christian thought has not been immune from this imperious way of thinking. C.F.D. Moule, an English theologian and biblical scholar, has traced the results of this in an important paper entitled "Man and Nature In the New Testament: Some Reflections on Biblical Ecology"³¹. He describes how a well known British naturalist lost two tame otter cubs when they were blasted to death by a shotgun, wielded by a minister of the Church of Scotland who was out for a stroll on the beach. When asked why he had done such a thing, the minister replied: "The Lord gave man control over the beasts of the field".³²

Actually, the minister's attitude is not at all common today, and would be greeted with revulsion by most Christians and non-Christians alike. For what has happened during this century is that a great reaction to cruelty to all creatures has set in. This new attitude has taken some strange forms. For example, many people would protest far more vigorously the death of the two otters above than they would the deaths of six million Jews in Europe during World War II. Perhaps it is the sheer magnitude of the human cost of modern war that staggers the mind, but the fact remains we do seem to have our values solely informed by sentiment in many instances. The charges of sentimentality and romanticism must be borne by some

conservationists and their sympathizers.

This new attitude may be partly formed by man's alienation from nature. It takes the form of a highly sentimentalized outcry against that which is visible, with a sheer lack of interest in the countless more subtle quiet forms of cruelty which man visits on his fellows and on the earth. It is a selective ethic, a choosy one. It has been called "an aesthetic approach to morals". "Everything is morally reprehensible which does not give aesthetic pleasure".³³ When such an approach forms attitudes toward nature without regard for biological fact, the results can be tragic.

Many wildlife biologists, for example, have faced the frustrating task of controlling an exploding deer herd in the face of opposition to the shooting of does, or opposition to any shooting of deer at all.³⁴ Those opposed to deer shooting, and who profess a "live and let live" philosophy, forget that it was man himself who interfered with deer numbers by killing off such predators as mountain lions and bobcats, and by creating extremely favorable deer habitat by land clearing for agriculture. If it is pointed out that deer are starving in the winter, it is suggested that man feed them, again ignoring the biological fact that hay and carrots are not natural deer foods. Meanwhile orchards

are ruined, forest seedlings are destroyed, and still the deer starve.

As an example of the other extreme, we might consider the case of the California condor.³⁵ Few Americans have ever heard of a condor, much less seen one. This magnificent bird, with a wingspread of more than nine feet at full size, is now restricted to a very small area in the mountains of southern California. The entire breeding range covers only 53,000 acres on the Sespe Wildlife Area in Ventura County. The population of the bird, which cannot tolerate civilization, has been reduced to less than 50 individuals.

Little concern is shown however. Water-short California wants to build a dam near the condor's sanctuary which probably would cause the shy birds to cease nesting altogether. Here is a magnificent creature on the verge of extinction, due to man and his activities. Is not there an ethical duty to do all possible to save it? Do we owe more to deer than to the condor? Is it that deer are more visible, more attractive, or is it that it is simply the condor's misfortune that he has failed to adapt to man's way?

There are Christian insights which might help to inform our thinking toward the lives of all creatures without falling into the callous disregard of the otter-slaying clergyman on the one hand, or the sentimental, biologically illiterate, "live and let live" school on the other. In the Book Genesis, as part of the account of the creation of the world, the following passage occurs:

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth". (Genesis I:26)

C.F.D. Moule, in the monograph cited above, attempts to show here that the dominion over nature which God gave man is, first of all, a positive command.³⁶ Man is to use nature, not abstain from it. But he must use it as a son of God, responsibly, and not as an arrogant "Lord of Creation". Certainly, man has believed himself to be made in the image of God. Even the animals recognize his superiority:

He gave to men few days, a limited time, but granted them authority over the things upon the earth. He endowed them with strength like his own, and made them in his own image.

He placed the fear of them in all living beings
and granted them dominion over beasts and birds.
(Ecclesiasticus 17:2-4 RSV)

It is in the very exercise of this control that man shares
in the act of creation. He has been given the freedom over other
creatures. It is up to him to use it well. Indeed, his very use
of nature, and his belief, though often demonic and perverted,
that he is the master of creation is, at heart, a religious notion:

Man is responsible for ruling nature, and in this
sense he wears God's image... he is God's vice-regent
within creation... he is like a provincial ruler in an
empire; he is supreme over nature, he is accountable
to God alone. This is very different from any non-
religious view of the relation of man to the rest of creat-
ed things. Any purely biological view sees man as
capable, indeed in a unique degree, of controlling his
environment. But to say that he is intended to control
it, and that in this he is God-like, is to bring in the notion
of purpose: and teleology is no part of biology as such,
nor can it be any part of a non-religious view.³⁷

This is not an immanentist view which sees God present
in, and captive of, his own creation. Nor is the biblical idea
that man is purely biological, and thus purely animal. The
biblical thesis may not be "people vs. animals", but neither
is it that man equals animal. In fact, to the secular biologist
or anthropologist, even an enlightened Christian view of man's
place in nature might seem intolerably egotistic:

The thesis then is that, on the Christian showing, non-human nature has no independent rights. According to the Gospels, Jesus did not hesitate to say that a human being was of more value than many sparrows,³⁸

But, to justify by this, callous or unthinking treatment of nature; to set our goals by the number of flush toilets in a given area without regard to the effects on the rest of nature, is an abrogation of our duty. For God's care and dominion extend to all parts of creation. Our lordship over nature is not unsupervised.

At the same time, not a sparrow falls to the ground without your heavenly Father knowing; and the merely wanton shooting of a tiny bird (or an otter) is an abuse of man's position--a marring of the image of God in him.³⁹

In the Christian view, it is this marring of the image of God in man that has caused disastrous consequences in the world. St. Paul saw that the "whole creation has been groaning in travail until now" (Romans 8:22) While modern science has told us that dinosaurs became extinct on earth long before man appeared, a proper religious view would hold that this in no way excuses us from responsibility for deer or condors. Man cannot opt out, he has been given the dominion and he must exercise it wisely and with prudence.

The failure to exercise this dominion properly in man's long history has resulted in evil. Typhoid and Dutch elm disease, chestnut blight and lethal smog, the dead humanity of Auschwitz and the dead land on the outskirts and in the slums of our large cities--all of these come from this failure of man. By himself, man cannot save himself; that has always been a hallmark of Christian teaching. But he can turn from his arrogance toward the lives of other creatures and acknowledge his failure. He can ask for the grace to stop warring with nature and begin to act as a worthy steward.

The chief sin in biblical thought has not been murder, or sexual license, or even idolatry, but pride. Pride is the chief sin, deadly and insidious in that it is the one failure which blinds its slave to his own fault, thus deepening the fall into evil. But it need not be so. God has made man "a little lower than the angels" and given him lordship over nature. While this freedom may give him endless possibilities for evil, it also gives him partnership in a vast creation, with endless potentialities for great good. Part of nature, man has also been made part of the eternal, lifted out of slavery to his environment by a Saviour who died for all men.:

While man is part, indeed, of his environment, he is, on this showing, distinctive because he alone is a consciously purposful part, and therefore a part which is decisive for the future of the entire frame of being. His distinctive contribution to the ecological set-up is meant to be rational and conscious manipulation in accordance with the will of God. It seems to me that such a view is integral with the confession of a real incarnation and of a new creation in Christ.⁴⁰

Of all the contemporary statements about the Christian attitude toward the life of creation, none has received more attention, nor has been more widely misunderstood than the "Reverence for Life" ethic of the late Dr. Albert Schweitzer. This great concept, which formed the ethical foundation for almost his entire adult life, came to Dr. Schweitzer in a single haunting moment which he described many times afterward. In September of 1915, he was travelling on a little steamer up an African river, on the way to visit the wife of a missionary, who had been ill. He had been struggling on the trip to formulate a thought which would encompass all the teeming life of the jungle: human, plant, and animal, which he had found in that equatorial forest:

At sunset of the third day, near the village of Igendja, we moved along an island set in the middle of the wide river. On a sandbank to our left, four hippopotamuses and their young plodded along in the same direction. Just then in my great tiredness and discouragement the phrase "Reverence for Life" struck me like a flash.

Only by means of reverence for life can we establish a spiritual and humane relationship with both people and all living creatures within our reach. . . . Through reverence for life, we come into a spiritual relationship with the universe. . . . Through reverence for life, we become, in effect, different persons.

Reverence for Life well sums up an urgently needed quality in America today. First, reverence --not the treatment of life as a thing, a commodity. The sheer carelessness with which we slaughtered magnificent forests, and by which we now pour filth into the air and waters of the country makes one wonder if this is somehow related to the apathy with which we view the highway fatality figures after a major holiday weekend. The gift of life, as represented by the humblest of the algae to magnificent humans such as Einstein or Winston Churchill, is viewed in many quarters carelessly, and as of little consequence.

Then, reverence for life, all life: Not just human, nor just that human life which is white skinned, nor of our temperament. Not just those forms of life which are aesthetically pleasing to us, or satisfy our emotions, but a carefully thought out, responsible attitude toward all life, based on biological knowledge and nurtured

by spiritual insight. Not the "Nature-faking" type of rhapsodizing against which Theodore Roosevelt railed, but an informed awareness. Schweitzer himself used insecticides around his hospital, and went hunting on occasion. His celebrated refusal to step on ants or to allow moths to fall into his kerosene lamp was a deliberate and deeply religious symbolical act to atone for the harm that man had done to the natural world. "The fundamental fact of human awareness is this: I am life that wants to live in the midst of life that wants to live." Such words might well form the keystone of a Christian ethic toward the natural world.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER V

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CHAPTER VI

THE CHURCH AND CONSERVATION: II
URBAN MAN

There is little doubt today that it is the city--the great urban "technopolis"--that determines the character of much of the American countryside. In past times in our history, the remoteness of the city from rural areas assured the latter's retention of a unique character. Travel to rural places was arduous and time-consuming. The economy of such places as New York State's Adirondacks and the North woods of Maine was only indirectly dependent on the distant cities, chiefly through the export of raw materials and agricultural products. Only relatively small circular areas on the outskirts of large cities felt any pressure for urbanized land use.¹

The situation is far different today. It is now safe to say that no rural area in the continental United States can for long count on mere remoteness to retain its unique character. Those who buy land in such areas, counting on some years of undisturbed tenancy for vacation or retirement, are apt to find to their dismay that the bulldozers are on the march, even in their supposedly safe retreats.

Now that land settlement has long since ceased with the closing of the frontier, it is the closest large urban population that controls the future of any given rural area. Examples are innumerable: the abandoned hill farms of New Hampshire and Vermont have been bought up by Boston and New York residents for vacation retreats. A short five years ago the area in those states where such buying had been going on reached approximately half-way up their length, today it is practically impossible to find a "cheap" abandoned farm from the Massachusetts line to the Canadian border. The skiing boom, largely an urban dweller's hobby, has brought Swiss chalets and Greenwich Village-type sleeping quarters to hitherto isolated mountain valleys all across principal mountain chains in snow country. Land prices are no longer determined by stumpage values in timber country, but are set by the demand for land by city residents two or three hundred miles away.

A highly mobile society such as ours has given rise to entirely new cities in the Southwest, populated by retired urban workers and the new "clean industry" engineers and technicians. Modern superhighways and huge electric, oil, and gas transmission lines totalling thousands of acres, cross hundreds of miles of open country, linking distant large cities. These are all the impact

of an urban people upon the land, it is their decisions and choices which are determining land-use patterns over the countryside. Indeed, the only major land-use change in the United States since 1945 which has not been the direct result of urban impact has been the wholesale changeover in the southern states from one-crop cotton land to extensive re-forestation by lumber and paper companies.

The rise of urban America and the emerging character of urban man have been treated by many writers in the past fifty years, but perhaps none has done a more challenging job of setting out the theological implications of urbanization than Harvey Cox in his book Secular City.² This book bears some examination in this study, for Cox has carefully delineated the shape of the urban man, and as we have seen, it is urban man who will determine the shape of the entire country. Cox's basic thesis is that man has become secularized, and that this has had profound impact on how man views the natural world and how he will treat that world.

Some definition of secularization is essential; in Cox's words:

It is the loosing of the world from religious and quasi-religious understandings of itself, the dispelling of all closed world-views, the breaking of all supernatural myths and sacred symbols. It represents what another observer has

called the "defatalization of history", the discovery by man that he has been left with the world on his hands, that he can no longer blame fortune or the furies for what he does with it. Secularization is man turning his attention away from worlds beyond and toward this world and this time (saeculum: "this present age"). It is what Dietrich Bonhoeffer in 1944 called "man's coming of age".³

For Cox, if secularization is the present "coming of age" of man, then urbanization is the framework in which this is occurring. Urbanization is not merely a large city complex growing larger. It is a process, a style of life, which permeates the entire country with its character. As he points out, modern cities such as London and Rome are more than larger versions of their former selves. They are new, unique, and require new definition.⁴

We are now ready to view man's understanding of nature in this secularized situation. For Cox, as other writers have also noted, it is the Hebrew-Christian tradition which broke the way for the processes of secularization and Western technological advance by, among other things, "de-mythologizing" nature. As we shall see later, this has had some drastic consequences for our treatment of the natural world, but for now we shall follow Cox in his explanation of how the Hebrew-Christian view of nature was different.

Primitive man believed that he was one with nature and that everything was alive: a "vast network of kinship ties by which the creatures of the natural world are incorporated into the basic familial organization of the tribe".⁵ Cox notes that the magical view was really only broken through by the advent of the biblical faith:

That is why the Hebrew view of creation signals such a marked departure. It separates nature from God and distinguishes man from nature. This is the beginning of the disenchantment process. . . It is true. . . that modern man's attitude toward disenchanted nature has sometimes shown elements of vindictiveness. Like a child suddenly released from parental constraints, he takes savage pride in smashing nature and brutalizing it (but) the mature secular man neither reverences nor ravages nature. His task is to tend it and make use of it, to assume the responsibility assigned to The Man, Adam.⁶

Primitive man, as is well known, lived in harmony with nature, but where did this harmony arise? As a noted Western theologian, Denis de Rougemont, has shown, it was in order to propitiate nature so that he could live with her demons that man lived in harmony with what he saw as nature's laws.⁷ It was only in those areas where he achieved harmony that appealed to man; the rest was pure terror. It has been pointed out that the only pleasant renderings of nature in medieval painting and poetry are of orchards, on the outer edge of which is wilderness and horror.

Now, in the Western world, as a direct result of the biblical tradition, that horror has been removed:

Nature, now that every kind of magic has been expelled from it, is being domesticated by technics and domesticated for the first time in history. Already man commands the means of subduing several aspects of nature's "inhumanity." He can virtually ward off famine... control temperature,... drought... epidemics... a great number of diseases... distance and temporal intervals. Man is still far from having completed this subjection, but he is already entitled to consider completing it as something attainable.⁸

How far can a dedicated conservationist follow this apparent celebration of man's subjugation of nature? Is not this reasoning that very type which has caused so much ruin already to the environment? Nature may indeed have had the magic expelled from it, but to the person who is appalled by what we have done to the land since the Industrial Revolution, that is perhaps just the trouble. With enchantment finished, the ravishing has taken over.

Here is an area where conservationists and such far-thinking theologians as Cox can learn from one another. First of all, the secularists are correct in stating that the magic of nature has been broken for all time. Modern secular man is fully a pragmatist. He holds no ideologies, no systems. He sees what needs doing, and does it. It is in this sense that it is futile to argue that man should not control nature. Of course he will do so, and with increasing

effectiveness.

On the other hand, conservationists are right in their warnings over any easy optimism over an urban civilization. If secular man will not hear of conservation presented as an ideology or a religion, he must begin to listen to it presented pragmatically, that is, on his own terms. It is significant that Harvey Cox makes little mention in The Secular City of conservation or the natural environment. The conservationist reading him might wonder if his celebration of the city is a bit premature. Without resorting to scare techniques, he might point out the alarming rise in strange new neuroses of urban dwellers cut off from natural landscapes. He might list the disadvantages of city life: extreme noise levels, dirt, overcrowding in racial ghettos, transportation snarls. Cox mentions some of these problems and claims that they can be solved by pragmatists. Conservationists must be allowed to offer their philosophy as part of the solution.

In the following final chapter, we will examine how the Church can aid the conservationist in presenting his thought to all men. We will also point out a few of the areas where breakthroughs toward this end have already occurred.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER VI

¹ Allen H. Morgan, writing in the Massachusetts Audubon magazine, Winter, 1965, tells how his father, as recently as 1927, was one of the first "businessmen-commuters" to move to the then farming community of Wayland, Mass., now a suburb of Boston.

² Cox, Harvey, The Secular City, The MacMillan Co., New York, 1965, 276pp.

³ Ibid. p2.

⁴ Ibid. pp4-6.

⁵ Ibid. p22.

⁶ Ibid. pp22-23.

⁷ de Rougemont, Denis, Man's Western Quest, Harper and Brothers. New York, 1956, p134.

⁸ Ibid. p138.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHURCH AND CONSERVATION PHILOSOPHY

The Christian Church needs to be identified with, and participate in, the conservation movement in the United States. It needs this not merely as an activity in a good cause, but because we have reached a point in our history when such a movement is essential for the maintenance of man's dignity. The Church has always seen itself as placed in the world to lead men to that light spoken of in the Fourth Gospel: "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life". (John 8:12) Part of the task of the Church in the world today is to face up to its responsibilities to conservation.

Solutions to modern conservation problems are not simple, their ramifications go deep. Man now stands at a tremendous juncture in his history, one at which he is leaving behind enslavement to the natural world from which he sprang. It is now his choice, not nature's force, which will determine his future. Crucial in this choice will be the manner in which he will treat the world which gave him birth so long ago.

One of the possibilities which lies ahead is that man will attempt to separate himself still further from nature. This is the direction against which the conservation movement protests. It claims that for man to so cut himself off from the fundamental natural realities of life would be a tragic mistake. Men other than conservationists have seen this also, of course, and have protested. C. P. Snow has described a gulf that is widening between man of science and men of the spirit: men of art, literature, and religion. In his small book The Two Cultures¹, he has charted out this rift, and has expressed a fear that it is swiftly widening.

A Scottish theologian, Dr. John Baillie, has also described the gulf², and has stated his belief that it was all foreshadowed for the West in Plato's Phaedo. In that drama, Socrates is in prison. He tried to reason out his being there solely in terms of causation, and came to the absurd conclusion that his muscles and flesh and skin were the "cause" of his being in a jail cell. Naturally, he rejected such a mechanistic conclusion. Then he began to look for another, one which would take in motivation. "The whole later history of Western thought may be fruitfully considered as the story of the various ways in which thinkers have dealt with the issue thus first set

before them by Socrates. "3

It is not difficult today to see that in their treatment of nature, especially since the Industrial Revolution, men have been choosing to deal with nature in a mechanistic way. The world has been viewed, in Western countries, as a place to live on, and not with. Resources have been plundered, mined, rather than tended and husbanded. The effects of all this are being heightened daily by modern technology.

The West has already exported this technology and world-view to the East, now it stands on the threshold of exporting it to outer space. Technological machinery already has been sent to the moon and to Mars. If the gulf described by C. P. Snow is real, there is little doubt about on which side most of us stand. There is also little doubt that the triumph of science over environment has outstripped man's capacity and desire to live in peace and harmony with nature. Somehow, the gulf between science and faith must be bridged once again.

Almost above all others, the modern conservationist most consciously and deliberately bridges this gap. In so doing, he certainly deserves a hearing by the Church. The conservationist's standing in the scientific community is

rarely questioned. There is little tolerance in such fields as ecology, fisheries or wildlife biology, soil or forest science, for sloppy inaccuracy. Such people know well the worlds in which they deal. If they are dedicated conservationists, they also know the world of the spirit.

The late Rachel Carson, who awoke America to the dangers of indiscriminate pesticide use in her Silent Spring, also wrote hauntingly and beautifully of man and his ancestral home, the sea, in The Sea Around Us.⁴ Aldo Leopold (1886-1948), a professional wildlife manager in Wisconsin, helped to revive the essay as an American literary form in his nature writings.⁵ One of his books elicited from the present Secretary of the Interior the comment that "if asked to select a single volume which contains a noble elegy for the American earth and a plea for a new land ethic, most of us here at Interior would vote for Aldo Leopold's A Sand County Almanac".⁶

Joseph Wood Krutch, now of Arizona, combined careers of drama critic, editor, teacher, and journalist, with his other great avocation of naturalist-philosopher.⁷ Donald Culross Peattie is a trained botanist and a noted writer who communicates a great feeling for the plant life of the world.

Dr. Paul Errington of Iowa State College writing on marshes and wetlands, Sigurd Olson of Ely Minnesota on wilderness, Henry Beston on the beaches of Cape Cod, John Kieran on the natural life in the city of New York; all communicate a feeling of love for the world, plus an intimate technical knowledge of their subjects. In the latter they are truly modern men. In the former they are at one with their great predecessors: Henry Thoreau, William Bartram, John Muir, John Burroughs, Ralph Waldo Emerson.

This spirit moves these men and women to a passionate belief in conservation. None are content to be detached scientists, withdrawing in seclusion to the laboratory or study. All speak out of deep conviction against the abuses to the land which they see all about them. As conservationists, they seek to point out to man the fundamental realities upon which his life exists and which now are being increasingly hidden from him.

What we have actually done as we have built cities and tended to lead more and more exclusively urban lives is not to turn toward either the God-who-is-not-Nature or the Man-who-is-not-Nature but to busy ourselves with with that part of the natural world which is not alive rather than with that part which is. What we have tended to become is not either the Humanist or the Worshiper but quite simply the mechanic and the technologist. We have forgotten the beast and the flower not in order to

remember either ourselves or God, but in order to forget everything except the machine.⁸

It is not merely that he dwells in cities and associates with machines rather than with plants and with animals. That, indeed, is but a part... of his growing isolation. Far more important is the fact that more and more he thinks in terms of abstractions, generalizations, and laws; less and less participates in the experience of living in a world of sights and sounds, and natural urges.⁹

These words by Joseph Krutch, an agnostic, writing of man and the earth might well have been those of a perceptive Christian writing on the Church. For in the matters of the Spirit too, it has become a modern failing that men tend toward abstractions rather than participation in that which is real. Far-sighted Christians are fighting this trend. In fact, wherever there is healthy Christian renewal in the world today, it is fairly certain that those concerned will be involved in the very real stuff of the world. Perhaps this is much the same reality toward which the conservationist bids us look also.

The current liturgical revolution is an example. While there might seem to be no immediate connection between watersheds, secure topsoil, clean air, a generally healthy environment, on the one side, and the prescribed worship services of the Church on the other, a deeper look shows the relationship. Many modern churchmen are concerned to make

their liturgies (literally laos ergon: people's work) truly representative of the reality of the world. Thus, the liturgical revival, or movement, is just the opposite of being religious in the wrong sense, that is, fussily concerned with worship for its own sake with no concern for the world it is supposed to represent.

This revival, which is sweeping the Roman Catholic and the Anglican churches, and is now extending to Protestantism also, seeks to "re-establish a society in which men are capable of accepting their responsibility for all of life".¹⁰

The very stuff of worship, the things used: bread, wine, water, oil, incense, salt, all are taken from the earth before being offered up to God. Certainly a sense of husbandry and good use should accompany this symbolic taking for all of life. Wheat fields and vineyards are not familiar sights to the majority of modern, urban, American Christians. Yet, when bread and wine are offered at the Holy Eucharist, or Mass, or Lord's Supper, what a tremendous opportunity to recall with thanks the good things of the earth. What a most significant time for all men, even the most sophisticated and urbane city-dwellers, to be reminded that they owe their very lives to the earth. Among its many other very hopeful attributes, modern liturgical

revival could be one significant means of restoring the Christian's sense of organic unity with the world.

There are other hopeful signs for the dedicated conservationist today in the Christian Church. The task of Christian education, long seen as the transmission of unchanging doctrines, is giving way to a more exciting, vital, dialogical relationship among all the people of a given parish or church. In this dialogue, the real issues of life, as they are met at each age level, are wrestled with. Then the relevance (or irrelevance!) of the Christian Faith for each issue is sought out, sometimes quite painfully. As with liturgy, the quest is for reality and concreteness.

As noted above, the Church is taking seriously now its educational role in areas such as civil rights and ecumenics. These it feels to be directly rooted in its understanding of what the Gospel means for our time. Some signs now point to an interest in conservation. Basic to this is the endorsement of population control and family planning by all major non-Roman Western churches, and the increased willingness of the Roman Catholic Church to seek redefinitions of its own historic stand in these areas.

More direct involvement in conservation education also is becoming evident. A proposed Plan of Church Union for seven denominations in the United States would, if adopted in its present form, carry for the first time in a church's history, a definite responsibility for conservation as part of its teaching office.

Chapter IX Section A, Article 4C "Teaching".

On each bishop in his diocese, and on the bishops as a body, is laid the responsibility of publicly stating as need may arise, the doctrines of the Church Universal as understood by the United Church, and their application to the problems of the age and of the country in such fields as economics, social relations, etc., and in such issues as urban development, conservation, war and peace, etc. 12

Another recent ecumenical venture has resulted in an excellent statement of the Christian position on man's relation to the earth and his responsibilities thereto. This is a book entitled The Church's Educational Ministry: A Curriculum Plan.¹³ Based on the dialogue theory of Christian education mentioned above, this volume is the work of a joint committee representing sixteen major Protestant denominations in the U.S. and Canada. One of its sections, under the heading "Life and the Natural Order" is one of the best conservation statements yet to emerge from any Christian group.

This statement finds that there is a definite Christian position on the world of nature, one in which man is called upon for "his creativity by which the fruitfulness of nature is restored especially as this creativity, through a penitent response to the love of God, is united with the essential creativity of nature".¹⁴ Again we see that man, in the Christian view, is called by God to be co-creator in the world with him.

As a final example of the hopeful signs for the conservationist in Christianity today, we might look to the revolutionary thought of the late French Jesuit and paleontologist, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Teilhard's philosophy does exactly that which Harvey Cox, in The Secular City, says cannot be done in a pluralistic age: it reconstructs a total world-view, based on evolution. Whether or not one agrees with his conclusions, Teilhard's methodology will prove increasingly fruitful for those who seek a more comprehensive and loving attitude toward nature.¹⁵

Teilhard, by his own proclamation, was not a "spiritual" person. He was a thorough-going materialist, in the sense of which William Temple spoke when he called Christianity "the most materialistic of all religions".

Let others perform their higher function of proclaiming the splendors of your (Christ's) pure Spirit! As for me, dominated as I am by a vocation rooted in the very fibres of my nature, I neither will nor can do other than speak of the countless extensions of your Being incarnate throughout matter.¹⁶

Words such as these, of course, raise the question of pantheism, and this was only one of many charges raised against Teilhard by his own Church of Rome while he was alive. But to see his thoughts of God simply as One who is immanent in, and contained by, his own creation, is to completely mis-read Teilhard de Chardin. Rather, his celebration of the whole created universe, as seen through his eyes as priest and scientist, fairly shouts with joy and praise to a God who is Lord and Master over all the far-flung worlds.

We creatures, left to ourselves we are but shadow and void. You, my God, are the foundation and the stability of the eternal realm, without duration or space... (You are) the actual goal of a union a thousand-fold more beautiful than the destructive fusion imagined by any pantheism.¹⁷

The glory in all of this is that God has made man chief among creation, for Teilhard, the "apex of evolution".¹⁸ The true lover of nature may thus see himself not just as one higher species, but as the major species, by the fact of his having been

the spearhead of evolution. The work of Teilhard de Chardin is indeed a "Hymn of the Universe", one of the most challenging and significant views of man and nature to emerge in all the history of the Church.

To be "united with the essential creativity of nature" is perhaps the finest single definition of true conservation available for us at this time. It is highly encouraging that originated in a Christian statement on man in the world.¹⁹ The examples of the Church's participation in conservation given above are heartening, and there are more here and there. But there is nowhere near enough Christian conservation in the light of the job to be done. Education is only the beginning, though a necessary one. Words and statements must be translated into deeds.

As a recent government document shows, men must act if the world is to remain habitable for them.²⁰ There is no choice in this. Similarly, the Christian can no longer fail to act on such problems as population control, environmental quality, and control of the atom. To stand aside and await the outcome as "God's will" is, as never before, an evasion of mature responsibility.

The Christian can also look upon some of these terrible choices as great opportunities. The dread that accompanies them may indeed be an instinctive fear at accepting the role of co-creator with God. But the possibilities beyond the fear and resulting apathy are tremendous. Speaking before a symposium entitled "Man's Role In Changing the Face of the Earth" at Princeton University in 1956, Artur Glikson proposed a reconstruction of nature as payment on the debt we have incurred to the land.²¹ Using The Netherlands and Israel as examples of what can be done to create modern healthy natural environments, Glikson commented that it was now possible to do this on a much vaster scale.

He spoke of the "greatest enterprise of planned environmental change since Neolithic times... with the help of science, man reconstructs nature in its own image, which is at the same time his own best image".²² The perceptive Christian knows that the present blighted state of the American land is a reflection of man's broken image, the result of sin. He also knows, in glorious joy, that sin is forgiven, that broken men are healed and restored. In the same way, the broken land of America can be restored and made whole once again. Conservationists have been fighting for this, almost alone, for the past

one hundred years. The Church is needed on this quiet battlefield; Christians are needed in the conservation fight.

A recent Time Magazine "Essay" said, in speaking of the future of man: "The chief message of the futurists is that man is not trapped in an absurd fate but that he can and must choose his destiny--a technological reassertion of free will. ²³ We can choose once again to treat the earth as a living, vibrant, organism; one of the major avenues of God's revelation to us. We can begin again to treat nature as a Thou rather than an It. Good conservation and responsible stewardship can restore to us the essential harmony of healthy men in a healthy land. The choice is ours.

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¹⁷Ibid., pp38-39.

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²¹Glikson, Artur, "Recreational Land Use" in Thomas, William, editor, op. cit., p896ff.

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